

A Tourist Guide to IRAN

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A Tourist Guide to Iran

Where to go and what to see

از سفرها مرد کی خسرو شود .
نا سفرها مرد کی خسرو شود ؟

*The traveller like King Khoshru will be,
But the non-traveller, when will he like Khoshru be?*

Persian saying.

*To the memory of my beloved grandmother Cursetbai
(nee Rustamjee Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy) and my grandfather
Shapoojee Jewajee.*

This Book is dedicated.

PREFACE

TRAVELLING through Iran is increasing in popularity, yet so few of the travellers know exactly what antiquities to see in Iran, or how to get to the different places. Most of the books on Iran are old and out of date, and a kind of guide-book is urgently needed. I hope this book will supply the traveller through Iran with all he wants, and help him to see the antiquities there.

I want to thank A. W. Davis, Esq., for supplying me with some very necessary information for my book, my brother K. Kharegat, Esq., for making line maps for publication, and the Iran League for lending me blocks.

R. KHAREGAT

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FOREWORD

Educative and Enlightening Value of Travel

THE educative and enlightening value of travel has always been known and recognized as very great. In Europe, and especially in England, a youth's education is never considered to be complete until he has seen a little of the outside world. The achievements of England's great sons has been in no little measure due to this foresight of English parents.

Europe has the advantage over us in this, that enlightened nations with different modes of civilization are found there close to one another, and means and comforts of travel are handy everywhere, so that these provide alluring opportunities to people inclined to travel. Nevertheless, in India itself too there are so many different country aspects and so many different sorts of people with special accomplishments and pursuits, that there is no reason why parents of moderate means should not send their sons to the different parts of the country for educative purpose. Parsi parents at any rate would be doing a lasting benefit to their sons if they followed this principle in the matter of their sons' training.

Great Travellers

Enlightened and observant travellers have appeared at all times ; and such men as Herodotus, Fa Hien, Strabo and Marco Polo have left accounts of their movements, observations and inquiries, that have provided lasting instruction and entertainment to the nations. Ordinary men, and especially youths, may not all have that acute sense of observation and talent for inquiry as might enable them to obtain the same results ; and human guides that may be found in different lands are not always trustworthy and well-informed to give travellers correct information and guidance. Written guides may serve the purpose far better and in a more beneficial way. A good written guide therefore has always a high value.

Iran's Fascination

Countries having old and glorious history have a special fascination for travellers. Greece, Rome and Egypt have monopolised the attention of the nations in this respect ; but Iran offers no less opportunities for visiting historical places, centres of old and celebrated culture, and grand and inspiring relics of the past. Enterprising visitors have no doubt travelled in this great land and left us fascinating accounts of their movements and observations. Sir Henry Layard, Sir John Malcolm, Morier, Ker Porter, Lord Curzon, General Sykes, Professor Jackson and others have all visited and left beautiful accounts of the great land of Iran. And a wise intending traveller would read at least some of them before going to that country.

Reading of these works, however, may not equip the intending traveller with all the necessary information for comfortable and easy travelling where possible, and for warnings where these may not be found. Special written as well as human guides would be necessary for this purpose, and the volume introduced by this Foreword here will really be found to be a highly instructive and useful guide of this port.

Travel in Iran is far more easy and comfortable now than it was before, and is daily becoming more so. This circumstance is revealed in the fact of a growing number of Parsi and other visitors to Iran nowadays.

We believe it will be an inspiring experience periodically to take our young men in suitable batches to this land of our past glories. But these should be well guided and properly informed of the true incidents of glory and beauty associated with each place they visit. A careful study of the following work will greatly help in this purpose.

Colonel Rustam Kharegat's Valuable Tourist Guide

Lieut. Colonel Rustam M. Kharegat, I.M.S., was fortunate in having special opportunities for visiting and studying Iran with care. In 1928-29 he served as Medical Officer to the Consulate and ex-officio British Vice-Consul in Seistan and Kain. During this period, he travelled extensively in Iran and took extraordinary pains to visit all relics of the past, both great and small, and to take proper notes of them. There is hardly any other work of travel in Iran so full of topographical, historical, industrial, commercial and archæological information on every place seen or read of. And so the visitor would be supremely helped if he has the work in hand during his travel in Iran, even notwithstanding that some features and incidents of certain places might be found a little altered owing to Iran progressing wonderfully every day through the driving zeal of H. I. M. Reza Shah.

The Start of the Itinerary

Colonel Rustam Kharegat started his itinerary from Zaidan (Duzdab), which is the gateway of Iran on the East, especially because that was the direct route to his post in Seistan. He, however, does not proceed to describe immediately his journey to Seistan. He rather takes us to Meshed via Birjand and describes every intervening place of interest or importance. He describes Meshed in graphic detail; and thence he proceeds to Teheran via Nishapur, Sabzewar, Shahrud, Asterabad, Jajrun and Demghan. Colonel Kharegat's account of Teheran is clear and dispassionate, for he does not indulge in any ecstasy over it, though he appreciates the progress the city is making everywhere in layout and sanitation and imposing boulevards and parks.

Excursions Around Teheran

Among the excursions around Teheran the most interesting, of course, is the visit to Rhey and its ruins. Little can be seen and said about these ruins at present. But the great excavation works which have lately been projected are expected to unearth the most interesting and inspiring relics of the past, especially in relation to the Zoroastrian Church which in high antiquity had its chief centre in the city and province of Raghā or Rhey.

Mazanderan and Gilan

From Teheran Colonel Kharegat takes us to the beautiful country of Mazanderan. The splendid picture Firdausi has drawn of this country, may be found a little faded in its present state; but as the Shah has been taking a special interest in this land of his birth, and as we know considerable progress is being made in it after Colonel Kharegat saw it, its beauties and amenities may be found considerably improved now.

The next country visited is Gilan, as beautiful and unhealthy as its neighbouring land of Mazanderan. The principal city of Gilan is Rēsht, and other towns are Enzeli, Foumen and Lahijan, which all are described with due vividness and detail.

Azarbaijan and Kurdistan.

From Gilan Colonel Kharegat takes us to Azarbaijan, a region of sacred memories, for according to tradition the divine guide and helper of mankind,

Zarathushtra Spitama, was born in Urumieh, a paradisial region in it. The towns of Tabriz and Urumieh, which last is now named Rezaieyh, are described with usual care.

Then we enter Iranian Kurdistan and see Savajbulagh, the capital city of the province; Hamadan, the celebrated Ecbatana of the ancients with its great inscriptions of Darius, Kermanshah, Taqi Bostan which commemorates some scenes of Chosroe's chase, and Qasr-i-Shirin.

• Luristan and Susiana

From Kurdistan we step into Luristan which includes the Bakhtiari country, the home of a warlike tribe of pure Iranian descent which has preserved a state of semi-independence in all times and speaks a dialect very much resembling that of the Zoroastrians of Yezd.

Then we are taken to Susiana, now called Khujistan. Shushter, the capital, represents ancient Susa, though the modern city is at some distance from the ancient site. Susa was the first place in Iran where excavations on a large scale have been made and still continue. These are described in the following pages. We also find an account of Ahwaz and Mohammerah.

Glories of Isfahan and Ancient Perses

Then we pass on to Sultanabad in Iranian Iraq, and to Qum, Kashan and Isfahan. The last is a very ancient city which in later times became the capital of the Safavi Kings, and one of the most famous cities of the East. Some of its old glories are yet there and are well described in this work.

Farsistan, which represents the glorious province of Perses, the ancient home of the Parsis, is visited next. Its modern capital is Shiraz, where were born the celebrated Iranian poets Sa'di and Hafez. The ancient imperial capitals of Parsagardæ and Persepolis whose proper name probably was Darayavaugard or Darabgard, as we may now call it, are not far away. The ruins of Persepolis still arrest and thrill the human mind, and are described in proper detail. Parsagardæ was the more ancient capital of the province and was the imperial metropolis in the days of Cyrus and Cambyses. The ruins here are more difficult to visualize, but Colonel Kharegat has described them in a way as to revive them most vividly before us.

Ruins of Shapur, Yezd and Kerman

Then we go to Bushire and afterwards visit the impressive ruins of Shapur near Kazeroun. These mostly record the triumph of Iran over Rome in the days of Shapur and Chosroe. We are then led to Yezd, an ancient city with chequered history, specially interesting to us as being the main nucleus of the present Zoroastrian population in Iran. Colonel Kharegat has given a graphic account of these ancient people's constant heroism in enduring indescribable tyranny and injustice of inhuman bigots in power, for clinging to their ancient holy faith, and have yet preserved themselves as quite a superior and purer race before whom their tyrannizers dwarf into immoral and insignificant beings. Colonel Kharegat's account of this tyranny makes sad reading.

A visit to Kerman, another centre of Zoroastrian population, and the numerous landmarks around it, and a return to Zaidan (Duzdab) and a diversion to Seistan concludes the itinerary. Appendices, however, describe the ruins of Firuzabad and Serbistan in Iran, of Ctesiphon in Iraq, of Van

in Armenia, and of Mashita near the Dead Sea. These probably do not exhaust the subject of the theme, though they widen our horizon of outlook on the subject of Iran.

Colonel Kharegat's Valuable Work

A map of the itinerary, nearly 100 illustrations and some plates of Sassanian coins are appended to the volume. And altogether one must concede that Colonel Kharegat deserves the reader's thanks for the immense labour he has bestowed on producing the work.

The impression we gather of the country and its people from the account faithfully given in the following pages, is a gloomy and sickening one, excepting for a glamour of past glory which peers from underneath it, and the natural goodness of the soil, the air and the water which notwithstanding their being wilfully spoiled or neglectfully allowed to be fouled, assert their nature in glorious patches of natural beauty and the wonderful productivity and healthfulness of the country in general.

Centuries of misrule and ignorance have produced their inevitable effect on the people who are otherwise good-natured, vivacious and likable. Tomb-worship seems to prevail everywhere, infidelity, murder and anarchy appear to have been a constant feature among the people, unclean and insanitary ways have been the formed habit of the masses, and the sense of patriotism has in most cases been found subordinated to self-seeking passion. Long tyranny of despots has created insincerity and sloth in the people, as truth involved them in calamity, and the fruit of labour brought on them the depredations of the rapacious hand of the tyrant and his myrmidons.

Only by realizing this fully may be formed an idea of the huge undertaking of H. I. M. Reza Shah to cleanse these dark features from the country and the nation. May he succeed in this noble aim and may the land of Iran again emerge into that state of goodness and glory which distinguished it in the past !

SOHRAB JAMSHEDJEE BULSARA, M.A.

JOGESHWARI (BOMBAY),

20th July 1935.

CHAPTER I

FROM ZAHIDAN (DUZDAP¹) TO BIRJAND

THE traveller coming into Iran from India has the option of two routes—one via Bushire, and the other by train from Quetta to Zahidan (Duzdap). The land journey is by far the more interesting of the two, and for people who have plenty of time and intend to see the whole of Iran, it is much more convenient than the sea route. From Quetta to Zahidan (Duzdap) is a wearisome journey of about thirty hours, and as there is no restaurant car on the train, or refreshment rooms on the stations, food and water have to be taken from Quetta. The Iranian frontier is reached at Mirjawa, and the railhead at Zahidan (Duzdap²).

Zahidan (Duzdap) has an elevation of 4,740 feet. Here is a post of the Iranian Customs Department, a British Vice-Consulate, a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran, and a British Mission. The place is growing steadily in importance. Many Indian traders have settled down here doing business, and, like Port Said, it contains the riff-raff of India. Here also motor cars can be hired or bought, and motor drivers supplied at exorbitant prices, the drivers usually being undesirable. It is better for the traveller to bring his own car from India. A new hotel, called the Grand Hotel, has been recently opened where travellers can put up. New barracks too have been built for the troops. Foodstuffs of all kinds can be obtained, but they are very expensive. Photographic stores can be obtained from Mullick & Co.

About one and a half miles to the east is a permanent Baluch camp, whence goats and sheep and milk are obtainable.

Zahidan (Duzdap) in spite of its altitude is notoriously unhealthy and full of malaria.

From Zahidan (Duzdap) the road goes north and ascends a hill. Soon after, the Kerman road branches off to the left, just at the point where the telegraph wires meet the Meshed road. The road goes up and down hill. The mountain of Kuh-i-Malik Siah is passed, which is the place where three empires meet, being the boundary between Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Iran. A shrine of the same name is passed on the left-hand side, where a *fakir* usually comes out and asks for alms. The Ziarat is of the Baluch pattern, not covered over by a building. There is a central tomb about fifteen feet long, with round white stones supported on upright pillars of brown and green stone, and a white marble pillar at each end. On the tomb itself are circular marble stones, and a few feet from this tomb is a wall of upright pillars forming an oblong that measures twenty feet by eight feet, with a walled entrance at its south-eastern extremity. There is an additional wall on the south-eastern end and in a line with it are stone cairns with bundles of upright sticks fixed into them on which hang rags of all colours.

Between the tomb and the wall is a great collection of sticks and tree branches, and on the ground are offerings of all sorts such as pieces of cloth, stores, goat horns, and leather bags, and a few marble utensils.

1 The railway now runs as far as Nok Kundi.

2 Duzdap is now known as Zahidan, but in order not to confuse it with the ruins of Zahidan, I have decided to put the word "Duzdap" in brackets.

From here the road goes along a valley, and gently uphill. To the right are rocks of a bright yellow colour with deposits of sand and gravel on them. The tops of the mountains vary from a violet colour to green. To the left are a series of sand walls, with red conical hills.

Hormuk (thirty-six miles from Zahidan) (Duzdap) is reached in about two hours. It is situated on a hill of sand and gravel in the centre of a basin of high reddish brown mountains which screen it all round. Towards the south-east is an opening from where the desert extending to Seistan and Afghanistan can be seen. This is the last stage on the Seistan road where drinkable water can be obtained. The water comes from two springs on the right bank of the nala. There are tamarisk trees but no grass. Here there is an Amniyeh post,¹ and a British telegraph hut consisting of two large rooms surrounded by a mud wall; there is also a farrash of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.²

Soon after leaving Hormuk through the opening mentioned above, the road enters the desert and gets extremely bad. Ten miles away is Dorai, where the road to Seistan branches off to the right, the road to Birjand continuing straight on. At the junction of cross roads is a cairn of stones, with a white stone on the top. The Birjand road now goes along by the side of the Kuh-i-Palangan. Eight miles from Dorai, Hauz is passed, a place marked by two empty water-tanks made by the East Persian Cordon in 1919. They are absolutely dry at present.

Mukhi Surkh comes next about half a mile from the road on the left. Here there is a copious spring of warm brackish water, springing from the hillside. The wandering tribes bring their flocks in large numbers to this spring for water. Ticks are very plentiful. Coarse grass and reeds are found in the neighbourhood. There are no habitations, but only a small Amniyeh post.

From here the road to Safidava is extremely good. Safidava is situated about sixty miles from Girdi Chah, and thirty miles from Aliabad on the way round the Seistan Hamun. Motors can halt here at any time of the day or night, but travellers have to make their own cooking arrangements. The place has a good water-supply from taps. The water is brought from eight small springs on the slope of Palangankuh.

There are a few small huts. The next village passed is Madeh Kariz (elevation 2,650 feet). Madeh is the name of a small walled mud fort or village, thirty-four miles south-east of Neh, about twenty-five paces square with four towers at the corners. The walls and the towers are still standing, but the gateway, and the roofs of the houses, and single rooms, inside, built along the walls on three sides, have fallen in. Two brick kilns built for burning bricks for houses, and earthenware pipes for Kareezes are situated at a short distance from the village. The water-supply depends on a Kareez from which flows a small quantity of brackish water, but the water of the higher wells is better than that of the lower wells. The village is said to have been built by Mir Alamkhan, Amir of Kain, but was neglected after a few years, and the few families that were located in it left owing to scarcity of grain caused by failure of crops for three successive years. The village is now deserted. There is a tamarisk jungle near the village.

An extremely good road leads from Madeh Kareez to Khunak, four miles to the east of Neh. The town can be recognized from a distance by numerous windmills. These windmills have been in use in Seistan since

¹ Road guard.

² Now no more.

the tenth century A.D. and were described by Al-Istakhri. Two mud walls are constructed parallel to the prevailing wind, one of which is inclined so as really to close the north-east entrance from which the wind comes, while the other end is open. The upper millstone has a strong pole fixed into it, which in its turn has flanges constructed of reeds. The wind entering the narrow end bears on each flange as it rotates, and an efficient windmill is produced. The windmills are only used, principally in the autumn, after the harvest, and are so arranged as to utilize the north-east wind, which is the prevailing wind. The Meshed-Seistan telegraph line passes through the village. Khunak is watered by one Kareez, and water is abundant. Petrol can be obtained for cars here.

After leaving Khunak, the road takes a sharp turn to the right. Four miles further on, the village of Neh is seen in the distance on the left. Nearer in the distance is the old village of Neh now abandoned. The village is situated on an elevated barren stony plain surrounded by hills. It lies in a hollow in the middle of the plain, and consists of a mud fort on a mound with a citadel. There are windmills to the north. Neh is situated at the junction of the old caravan roads to Birjand, Kerman, Bunder Abbas and Seistan. The roads follow two valleys separated from each other by a narrow ridge, and down these valleys the wind sweeps with terrific violence.

Continuing on, and passing through the plain, we come to a chain of hills, and after numerous ascents and descents, the town of Shusp is reached, 102 miles from Birjand. It stands at an elevation of 5,450 feet, and is situated in the Chah Daraz valley, which is bounded on the east by the Kuh-i-Baran, and on the west by the Kuh-i-Hari. The village consists of twenty-five houses, and has two windmills, an Iranian telegraph office, a caravanserai, and an old ruined fort, a relic of the days of the Baluch raids. Fresh milk and eggs can be obtained here. Apart from the orchards, in which are grown peaches, grapes, etc., there is very little cultivation. There is an abundant water-supply. The British Consulate, Seistan and Kain, has a nice and comfortable rest-house here.

Soon after leaving Shusp the road enters a sandy plain intersected by watercourses, and going through a dry river bed, the village of Sehlabad is passed at an elevation of 5,050 feet. It is situated in the Chah Daraz valley, between the Kuh-i-Baran and the Kuh-i-Hari hills, and is sixty-nine miles from Birjand. The Meshed-Seistan telegraph line passes close to the village, but there is no telegraph office. About six miles to the south is the Lung-i-Shuturan salt lake, which provides salt to the neighbouring villages. It has an abundant water-supply from a Kareez.

Not far from Sehlabad, on the western side of the valley, at the foot of a range of barren hills and close to the main Birjand road is the village of Sarbisheh—elevation 5,900 feet. It contains about two thousand inhabitants, and has the remains of an ark or citadel, and of an Uzbek watch tower in the vicinity. It lies in a wide plain, extending in gentle undulations north-west as far as Birjand, where it is closed by a range separating it north and south from the district of Shusp. Water can be obtained in the hollow at the foot of the hills. The people of this village manufacture an inferior kind of carpet called Ghileem.

The next village of importance on the road is the prosperous village of Mud, twenty-two miles south-east of Birjand, altitude 6,520 feet. On the south-east side is an old ruined fort over a small hill overlooking the village. The fort has a very deep well in the centre within its walls, which were of

stone with twelve turrets round it. Two underground passages led from the fort, one to the south-east and the other south-west, and were supposed to communicate with two houses about three or four miles away. Both of them are filled up now.

At the southern end of the village is the ark or citadel, a square construction about 280×150 yards, with mud walls about twenty feet high, and five feet thick and bastions. It was built by the great-grandfather of the present Shaukat-ul-Mulk, former Governor of Kain, but has been allowed to fall into disrepair, and is now unoccupied. The village is surrounded by orchards, and a number of the inhabitants own orchards in other parts of the valley. Snow lies on the ground during winter.

There is a caravanserai in Mud, and many carpet manufactories. Some very pretty carpets with a medallion centre are made here.

About seven miles east-south-east from Birjand, and fifteen miles from Mud is situated the picturesque village of Bujd to the right of the road. It is built along the side of a low ridge which runs down the centre of the Birjand valley. It has only about two hundred houses. Above the village is a ruined fort, and the houses are built in terraces down the slope. Round about the village are numerous jujube trees, mulberries and poplars. Water is plentiful and supplied by *kanats*¹ from the Kuh-i-Baqarran hills to the south-east. All the caravan roads east of Birjand used to radiate from here, viz., to Herat, Seistan, Farah, etc.

Soon after leaving Bujd, Shaukatabad, consisting of a caravanserai, and a cluster of trees round a pond is passed, and Birjand is reached.

¹ Underground aqueducts.

CHAPTER II

BIRJAND AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Birjand—Altitude 4,800 feet. Population about 30,000.

BIRJAND, situated on the northern slopes of a strong valley, is a place of great antiquity, and though much decayed is still of considerable importance. Since the days of Nadir Shah up to Yar Mohammud's death in 1871, it was a dependency of Herat. Later on, it supplanted Kain as the seat of Government, and it is now the capital of the Kainat. It is situated not far from the Afghan border.

The city itself looks imposing from a distance and is situated upon undulating ground and two higher hills. The streets are tortuous and narrow, arched over in some places, the buildings are dark and dirty, and made mostly of sundried bricks, some of the houses being two and three storeyed. Fresh water is obtainable from some of the hauz (water-tanks) in the city, but there is a small spring of good water two miles away.

The traveller to Birjand coming from the south just when he is about a mile away from the city, sees a few conical mounds on the right. These are the graves of criminals. Criminals not so long ago, when caught, were encased in mud, their heads being left free. They were fed by relations as long as they were alive, but the heat of the sun soon made the mud contract, and squeezed them to death.

Proceeding onwards, before entering the city, at the foot of a hill to the east of the city, and on the left-hand side, is the ark or citadel, a big square enclosure with bastions and towers. It has a commanding position, and it is surrounded by houses to the north and west. It is now used as barracks for the troops and has an excellent parade ground inside.

The Birjand River runs right through the city, and is used as the chief street of the city. It is absolutely dry except during heavy snow or rain. The river divides the city unequally into two, the northern portion having a graveyard, a few houses, a large caravanserai, and the British Vice-Consulate, and the Oriental Carpet Manufactory. While on the southern side are the main bulk of the houses, the Imperial Bank of Iran, and quite a number of shops (about 300 or more) wherein are displayed for sale, British and Russian goods, the latter preponderating, especially very pretty Russian cloth. Here also petrol and spare parts for American cars can be got. The portion of the town built on the left bank was formerly enclosed by a wall with gates and doors, but this is now done away with. The town itself contains a Madrasseh, several mosques, hammams and caravanserais.

At the end of the spur to the west of the town is situated a fort. Its walls are about forty feet high, and it is in the form of a square. It is built high on the river bank, and the approach to it is difficult and steep. The walls are in a dilapidated condition and the fort itself is in ruins.

Towards the south-east of the town is the residence of Hisham-ud-Dowleh, the present Governor of Birjand. At the foot of the Kuh-i-Baqaran, four miles to the south-south-east, is situated the British Consulate, and the summer residence of the Counsul for Seistan and Kain. Visitors coming to Birjand will find a great welcome at the British Vice-Consulate in the city. The present Vice-Consul is Jemadar Fazal Haque, I.M.D., a man of sterling worth.

The chief manufactures of Birjand are felts, carpets and woollen fabrics. Carpets are made in Birjand itself by the Oriental Carpet Manufactory, while many are also made in Mud and Daruksh, about fifty miles to the north-east of Birjand. Most of them have a large medallion in the centre.

While there is very little of interest to see in Birjand itself, many excursions can be made in the neighbourhood.

Not far from the Consulate, to the Kuh-i-Baqarran, are two dams or bunds. Access can only be got to them on horseback. The first bund is known as :—

- (1) The Bund-i-Umar Shah :—It was built by Mir Alam Khan, grandfather of the present Shaukat-ul-Mulk, Mohamed Ibrahim, some hundred years ago, and repaired once during the lifetime of Asadulla Khan, father of the present Shaukat. Rain-water, and snow on the hills gradually melt, and percolate into the Dareh (Pass) and finally collect against this bund.
- (2) The second bund is known as the Bund-i-Dareh, and was built by Asadulla Khan, the father of the Shaukat about fifty years ago. A small Kareez also exists above this bund, which adds water in the tank above the bund.

During the rainy season, water from hills flowed into the two Darchs, and used to come out of the two mouths, where the two bunds are built now, with such force that it washed off cultivations with it. After the rains the fields needed water, and owing to inadequate system of Kareezes, and other watering means crops used to dry owing to drought. It was therefore contrived to make the above bunds, and thus check the force of water, during the rainy season and also store water for the use of cultivation. Both the bunds have got holes from top to bottom so as to let out water when required for use of the crops. The public owning land that received water from the bund used to pay a tax to Shaukat-ul-Mulk. The dams are not in use now.

An afternoon excursion on horseback can be made from Birjand to Chehar Deh, where there is a pretty waterfall, and cool, clear limpid water.

CHAPTER III

EXCURSIONS FROM BIRJAND

THREE long-distance excursions can be made from Birjand, and they are all worth a visit.

I. *To Ab-i-Tursh*

A good motor road goes all the way. Follow the Seistan road as far as Hauz, beyond Bujd, then a road branches off to the left towards the Kuh-i-Muminabad. Ab-i-Tursh is reached in four and a half hours. The place is surrounded by hills on all sides, and looks more like a robber fastness than a health resort. Here there are two springs, and the smaller spring is the warmer of the two.

The analysis of the water is as follows :—

	Parts per 100,000.
Total solids at 105° C.	150.2
Chlorides	9.6
CO ³	66.4
SO ⁴	4.2
NO ₃	0.036
AlO and FeO	0.88
Ca (calcium)	23.9
Mg (Magnesium)	9.5
Na (Sodium)	13.0
K (Potassium)	1.4½
SiO	5.76

The calcium and sodium contents are therefore high, and are probably present, mostly as bicarbonates and chlorides. The water belongs to the class of water known as "Carbonate Waters" to which class "Vichy" belongs, but the Ab-i-Tursh water is nearly twice as hard as, and is considerably lower in saline constituents than Vichy.

There is nowhere to stay in Ab-i-Tursh, and it is advisable to take tents. The Shaukat-ul-Mulk is always willing to place his house at the disposal of visitors if requested. The climate of Ab-i-Tursh is much cooler and healthier than that of Birjand.

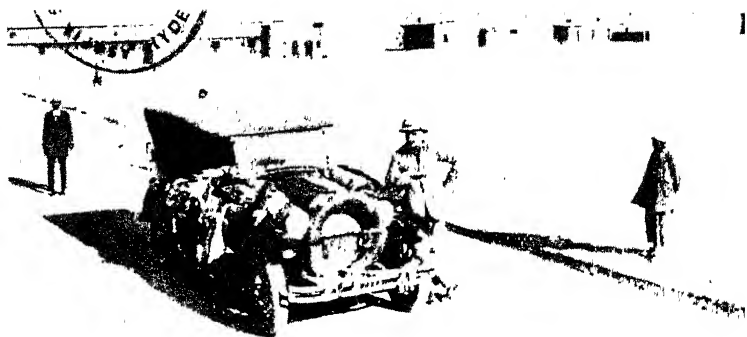
II

The second excursion is from Ab-i-Tursh to Furg¹ and back. An all-day excursion on horseback. It is advisable to do a circular tour, and go from Ab-i-Tursh via Kelata Mirza, and return via Buzun. Furg is ten miles from Ab-i-Tursh.

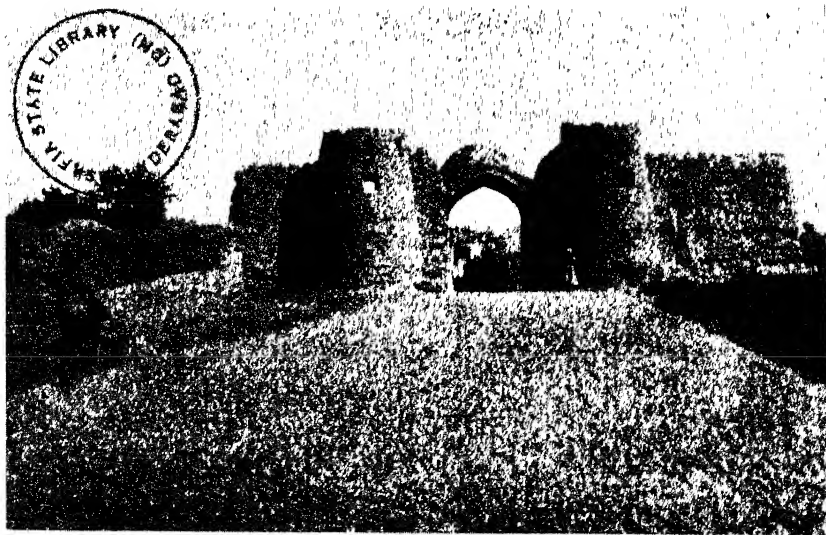
Furg is situated in the district of Tabbas Sunnikhana. This district is inhabited by Sunnis, and Sir P. Sykes says that it was really more Afghan than Iranian when it was seized by the Amir of Kain. Sunnikhana contains about sixty villages with a population of some 15,000, and lying on a low level fertile plain supplies Birjand with wheat and forage. It is forty-one miles east of Birjand on the road to Herat. The fort is situated on a small hill about 250 feet high, but is commanded by hills to the north and west within cannon shot. There is another hill to the south on the opposite side of the ravine.

The fort is of stone and built at the mouth of a gorge about one hundred and eighty years ago by Mirza Baka Khan. In the middle of a narrow

¹ See illustration on page 26.



THE AUTHOR'S CAR AT DUZDAP (NOW ZAHIDAN).



THE GATEWAY, KAIN.

valley, a serrated hill rises to about five hundred feet, and on its summit is constructed an irregular and formidable-looking castle. With Tabbas it shared the reputation of being almost impregnable, and on the strength of this, its Governor used to revolt periodically. For some years this was done with impunity, till one besieging general dragged a gun on to the hills above and opened fire.

The fort is now quite deserted. The building is a parallelogram with three tiers or ranges of buildings, the foundations and lower half of the walls and houses being of undressed stone and lime, and the upper and inner parts partly hewn from the limestone rock on which it stands. The upper portion of the walls, and battlements are a mixture of stone and mud and brick, and are crumbling to pieces. At the angles of the walls, are round towers of stone, and brick, and the walls are loopholed. The gateway is on the eastern side partly covered by the houses of the village, and there is a man who has the key. Within the fort are three tanks, but during the time of my visit, stones had fallen in and closed the openings. Water used to be brought to them from a spring in one of the hills to the west and conveyed by a *kanat* (covered aqueduct). The view from the fort is most picturesque. The hills of the Afghan frontier can be seen to the north across a barren desert; to the south and west are huge hills, while in the valley below and to the east is luxuriant vegetation, with well-watered gardens, and trees some of which furnish a considerable quantity of walnuts. The *zirikh* (barberry) is cultivated in large quantities and the fruit exported to the east.

The following notes about Furg Castle were given to me by Mr. C. P. Skrine, I.C.S.:—

“Mirza Rafi Khan inherited Furg Castle from Mirza Zaki, a Mirza of Nadir Shah. He built a great castle and dug *Kareezes* in *Sunnikhana*. He raided Kain and became *Yaghir*¹ for the Amir of Kain (Amir Mohtassim), grandfather of Shaukat-ul-Mulk. The latter's man, the lord of Sarbisha, Mir Asadulla, took Furg Castle seventy years ago by treachery. One of Rafi Khan's men called him in. Forty men climbed the high south walls of the castle at night, and with the help of the traitor killed Rafi Khan as he slept in the great keep. Rafi Khan's only son Malmud Khan was in a house below the keep on the south-east side. They sent a message to him that his father was ill. He came up, and they let him in by the postern gate of the keep. As soon as his head was through, they captured him, and tied his legs, and dragged him down the valley, and over the watercourse till he died. Rafi Khan had ten daughters, but no other son, and his wife who was pregnant escaped to Herat where his son Mohamed Rafi Khan Khurd was born. At the age of twenty-two he went from Herat to Teheran, and got a Sanad from the Shah, raised an army and came to Furg. First he went to Sarbisha and captured Mir Asadulla, and dragged him three times round the streets till he died. Then he took Furg. Later, however, the Amir of Kain, the father of Mohamed Ibrahim, Shaukat-ul-Mulk, brought four guns, and placed them in points commanding the fort and shelled it and took it. Mohamed Rafi Khan was sent to Teheran, but was killed in a quarrel on the way.”

There are a few carpet looms in the small village of Furg, while on a range of hills near by are said to be some disused copper mines.

Just above Furg lies the large village of Darmian-i-Furg. The gardens line the track for some two miles, the fruit trees in blossom and with autumn

¹ In rebellion.

tints, forming a sight which is always beautiful and never to be forgotten. The track winds up and up, the hills become rounded and more open, numerous hamlets with their pretty orchards are passed, the highest being situated about 6,500 feet. Several passes cross the range, and wild flowers are seen all over the place. The Birjand valley and the Kuh-i-Baqarran are seen in the distance, and after crossing a range of low hills Ab-i-Tursh is reached. Another interesting place to visit is Tabbas, whose fort is supposed to be of the same pattern as those of Herat and Fara. It is now broken down, but the Amir of Kain has built a round tower inside. Sir Percy Sykes thinks that it is probably a place of antiquity, the ancient name being Mazinan, tradition averring that the builder was a general of Alexander the Great.

I have spoken so often of the Amirs of Kain I feel that a short explanatory note about them is necessary.

The original founder of the family was Mir Ali Khan Khozeima. They believe themselves to be of Arab descent, and of the Khozeima tribe which was ruled by Tahir Zuliainain (Tahir of the Right Hands), a warrior who sat as Mamun on the Caliph's throne. Forced to emigrate from Bahrein during the reign of Haroon-Al-Raschid, they gradually became the ruling family of Kain. Neh and Bandan first fell into their hands, and about the end of the seventeenth century they had captured the whole district of Kain. On the fall of the Sefavi dynasty they became practically independent. A chief of this family blinded Shah Rukh, the grandson of Nadir Shah, at Meshed. The fortunes of the family were more or less bound up with Herat, and until the death of Yar Mohamed, the Vizier of Shah Kamran, in 1871, there were practically no dealings with Iran.

The Iranian Government recovered the province of Khorassan, so long independent of Iran, and the grandfather of the present Shaukat was seized after making an ineffectual resistance. He soon became an adherent of the Kajars, and his son Mir Alam subdued Seistan. He was an ideal ruler and kept his province free from the scourge of Turkoman, Baluch and Afghan raiders. Upon his death, he left Seistan to his eldest son, and Kain to his second son, and the Amir of Kain possessed himself of all the stored up wealth. Latterly the Shaukat was removed from the governorship, which was given to his nephew Hisham-ud-Dowlah, who is the present Governor of Birjand.¹

III

The third excursion is from Birjand to Chinisht via Mud. It is advisable to get to Mud the night before, and leave as early as possible next day, returning to Birjand the same night.

Chinisht is three farsakhs (about twelve miles) from Mud. A car can go through the dry rocky river bed south-south-west as far as Fanud, about one farsakh. The remaining eight miles must be done on horseback. The motor road is bad.

On the way to Chinisht, about one farsakh from Fanud, is the village of Khan where stands a Ziarat or shrine, known as the Ziarat-i-Bibi Zeinab Khatoun, the sister of the Imam Reza, who is buried at Meshed. Inside the shrine is a spring, which comes from the mountain in the neighbourhood, and it is said that if a sick animal drinks the water of this spring or even if the water is sprinkled on it, it gets well again. Still more wonderful properties are attributed to the spring, and tradition says that a woman can walk through the water to the source, whereas if a man attempted to do

¹ Hisham-ud-Dowlah has also been removed.

it, he is seized with cramp; also, if a pregnant woman went through the water, and if the unborn babe happened to be of the male sex, the woman was seized with cramp and unable to proceed.

From the Ziarat to Chinisht is another four miles. On climbing the last hill, Chinisht is seen in the valley below perched on a steep hillside, the houses nestling among great boulders. Far away in the distance is the plain of Arabkhaneh. In Chinisht are two remarkable caves, and one of them has never been explored. The other cave is cut out in the mountains to the north, and the custodian of the cave is an achondroplastic dwarf who lives in the town. Before entering the cave, it is well to take off coats and boots and hats. The entrance is by a very small hole which has rough steps cut at intervals. After a descent of twenty feet, and either going round or over boulders, we proceed in a lateral direction coming to a rough box in the first room. The box contains two mummified bodies.

The entrance from the first to the second room is through a small narrow opening, about twenty-one inches square. It is advisable to go in head first, and crawl on the abdomen putting the arms in front. After passing through the narrow opening, the cave opens out, and a full length skeleton of a female is seen lying on the ground.

Proceeding further, a blind end is reached and walls plastered with cement show that a water-tank had been cut in the living rock, and that there had been human habitation there, in some remote times. The tank is now quite empty. Retracing the steps towards the second room, a passage branches off to the right, and descends a long way. The rocks are very smooth and slippery, and it is impossible to make the descent with shoes. After a steady descent of about twenty feet, there is a narrow ledge of sloping rock, and behind it is a trellis work of wood. The ledge is narrow, and over a deep pit. This is the third chamber. Here there are four skulls lying in a row on a shelf, one of them with long hair on its head. The lower jaws are not there. On the ground below are three skeletons.

From the third room there is a sheer drop of about fifteen feet before getting to the fourth room. The ascent back again would have been very difficult, so I did not attempt it. I was told by my guide that there are ten rooms in all going right into the heart of the mountain. I have no idea to what period the skeletons belong, or if the place was originally meant for a cemetery or for prisoners, or a hiding place for robbers. The dwarf told me that the skeletons were the remains of a band of pilgrims who, upon hearing at Turbat that the Imam Reza had been poisoned, ended their days in the cave.

Not far from the cave is a Ziarat, and I was informed that the grave inside the Ziarat was of the master of the people who were buried in the cave. Close to the Ziarat is another cave which has never been explored, and it is impossible to go down it without a rope or a rope ladder. This cave has two entrances.

CHAPTER IV

FROM BIRJAND TO MESHED

THE road first goes along the river-bed, but enters the mountains soon after. There is a steady ascent all the time. At about sixteen miles, the ascent of the Samand-i-Shah Pass is commenced. It is a range of hills forming the water-bed between the Birjand valley and that of Sehdeh, the direction being due east and west, the summit of the pass being 1,900 feet above the level of Birjand. The pass is about six miles long and winding, and near the summit the defile narrows to a small passage. At the southern entrance of the pass, and situated amongst the hills, is the small village of Ghip, a village of about a hundred houses.

Soon after leaving the pass Sehdeh valley is crossed. The extent of cultivation in this valley is far in excess of what appears to be at first sight, for the villages are concealed from view in the nooks of the hills around, and each one has its own orchards and vineyards. The fruits produced are apricot, apple, peach, mulberry, etc. There is plenty of big game in the hills, chiefly markhor and ibex, but I am told the bear is not found. The plain is very flat and devoid of trees, but there is any amount of pasture. Carpets are manufactured in this district also.

On the north side of the Sehdeh valley, thirty-six miles from Birjand, is the village of Sehdeh, which was formerly one of the principal places of manufacture of Khorassan carpets. It has a population of about a thousand inhabitants, and is the headquarters in the Kainat, of the followers of the Aga Khan of Bombay. The water-supply is brackish, but sweet water can be obtained from a distance.

After leaving Sehdeh, an ascent is made, and at an elevation of 5,700 feet is the picturesque village of Rum (forty-six miles from Birjand). It is situated in a valley three-quarters of a mile wide, and consists of about one hundred and twenty houses built on the bank of a stream. There is a watermill which is worked in the cold weather when water is plentiful. About three miles north-east of the village is a spring from which fresh water can be obtained. The town water-supply is brackish.

The road after ascending to 6,450 feet makes a steady descent to Kain (4,800 feet). Kain was originally the capital of the district but has now been supplanted by Birjand. It is situated on the eastern side of a broad valley, stretching north and south. Ancient Kain is a city of great antiquity and is supposed to be the site of Artacoana, where stood the royal palace of the Arian princes who revolted against Satibarzanes. It was visited by Alexander with his army. Alexander on his way to Bactria took some light troops, travelled seventy miles in two days, and surprised the Arii who fled. Curtius says that 13,000 Arii defended themselves on a rocky hill. About two miles from the present town, on a steep semi-detached hill called Abuzar, are the ruins of a very old stone fort, the Kalch-i-Kuh. The buildings inside are dilapidated now. The walls are built of stone and mortar. The total length of the fort is some six hundred yards, with the interior full of ruined buildings. Behind the fort is a reservoir containing water.

A mile to the east is another fort called the Kalch-i-Dukhtar. Coins are occasionally found there. At the foot of the hills is a modern shrine in good repair which is the mausoleum of the saint Abuzar after whom the hill is named. This ancient Kain was destroyed by Shah Rukh who built

the present town ; and the Usbegs held Kain until the time of Shah Abbas the Great who expelled them, although the inhabitants say that the town was founded by Cain, the son of Adam. Modern Kain is a walled city with a gateway which was blown up in 1927. Inside, the streets are narrow but clean. There is a big mosque built by Karim-ibn-Jamshid in the fourteenth century A.D. (770 A.H.) according to an inscription on a stone above the arch. It is the only building of any size in the town. There are about a hundred miserable shops in the bazaar and Russian goods are principally sold. The wall surrounding the town is twenty feet high and one foot thick, but it has now fallen into disrepair, the southern portion being broken down in many places. The town has a population of one-fourth Sayeds and one-fourth Mullahs, who are exempt from all taxes. The water-supply is abundant, and the surrounding district is noted for its cultivation of saffron. There is a telegraph and post office in the town. Petrol can be obtained for cars.

Kaleh Kuh occupies the most ancient site of the city and the crest of two hills rising some five hundred feet above the plain. Approached from the north-east, a massive tower is passed, and the first line of bastioned walls is entered, then there is a slight rise past a tank. The second line of defence is reached by passing through a domed guard-room. The keep which occupies the second hill forms a separate work, and is thirty feet higher than the exterior work, the total length of the work being three hundred and fifty yards, while the width is thirty yards on an average. The highest fort was a stronghold, and of pre-Mahomedan times, but the lower works are comparatively modern, being constructed by Karim-ibn-Jamshed. On the platform built out from the side of an adjacent hill is the shrine of Abu Turab, a derwish, who flourished in the same century as Kerim-ibn-Jamshed.

After leaving Kain, the little village of Naughat is passed, and later on the flourishing village of Khidri, surrounded by fruit gardens and mulberry plantations, and abundantly watered by streams from the hills. Altitude 4,270 feet.

From Khidri onwards is a steady ascent of the Binar Pass, which at its highest point reaches an altitude of 6,800 feet, and then descends to the village of Kakh (altitude 5,300 feet). The village is situated on rising ground, at the mouth of a ravine, up a stony slope, and at the base of the Siah Kuh hills bounding the valley of Gunabad to the south and west. The land under cultivation is terraced out on the slope below the village. The water-supply is excellent. There are four kanats¹ and fifty natural springs. The population is fanatical, and Mullahs and Sayeds abound in the place. There is also a Madrasseh, two mosques, caravanserais and a few shops.

Another remarkable feature of the village are two ancient mud citadels, constructed one within the other. They were built on an elevation, with high walls and flanking towers, and connected by a drawbridge, and each had an independent water-supply. They are in ruins now.

The principal manufactures of the town are iron agricultural implements, inlaid pocket saws, and silk embroidery called "Kashida." Opium poppy is also grown.

The next village of importance on the road is Jumain, and in the distance to the left is seen Gunabad. Jumain is a large village without walls, of about six hundred houses, and about a hundred shops. Outside the

¹ Underground aqueducts.

town is an ark or citadel, which looks imposing, but is in a ruinous state. There is plenty of water and numerous fruit gardens. An excellent view is obtained from the high central tower of the citadel. For a radius of a mile around the town are fields of wheat; beyond them is cultivated opium ground. The whole plain is dotted about with walled fruit gardens. Beyond them are trees and domes and minarets showing the position of other villages.

A mile beyond Jumain on the right are the remains of the mud huts of the East Persian Cordon of 1919. The huts are habitable and still in good condition, and outside the encampment is a cemented tank round a delightful spring.

The road from Birjand to Jumain is excellent, but soon after leaving Jumain, a sandy tract is encountered, as far as Maina, and going is rather difficult. Only one big village, the village of Amrani, is passed fifteen miles from Jumain. Amrani is half-way between Birjand and Meshed. The present village was built in A. D. 1870 by one Haji Hassan Ali of Tabas, who also built a good reservoir outside the village, which stands to the present day. During the Haji's lifetime, the village possessed a large number of mulberry gardens and vineyards, but these have all disappeared now. Since 1894 when Haji Hassan Ali's son, Sikander Khan, was murdered, the village has been neglected, and is now in a sad state of decay.

After leaving Amrani the road gets bad for twenty miles till Maina which is the first village of the Turbat-i-Haidari district from the south, and from Maina to Turbat is an extremely good road. Turbat-i-Haidari is two hundred and two miles from Birjand, and it is advisable to halt there for the night. There are one or two garages with rooms on top where one can spend the night.

Turbat-i-Haidari—Altitude 4,480 feet. Population 15,000.

Also known as Turbat-i-Ishaq Khan, is about ninety miles from Meshed. The town is situated at the western extremity of a valley known as the Julagh-i-Zava, which is enclosed on the north, west and south by mountain ranges, with breaks in their continuity permitting the passage of the main roads which converge at Turbat-i-Haidari.

On the north, at a distance of eight to ten miles, is the high range traversed by the Baider Pass, while to the south, at a distance of six miles, lie low hills which form part of the range separating the Bukharz and Khaf districts; to the west, at a distance of a mile from the town, is the end of the Turshiz Range. Between it and Turbat-i-Haidari, the valley is traversed from north to south by a broad and shallow river-bed, in which a thin stream of water occurs. There is cultivation right up to the walls, and numerous villages are situated close to the city.

The old town is about a mile away from the present one, and has a weak and dilapidated mud wall, with bastions every seventy yards. The town has now outgrown its walls, and the southern quarter is outside. At the north-east corner of the walls are the ruins of an old fort, the ark (or fort) of Ishaq Khan.

The city derives its name from the tomb of a renowned derwish, Qutub-ud-Din Haider (A. D. 1156-1231). His tomb is marked by a red brick mausoleum on a mound to the north-west of the city, and it is commonly believed that the site formed the centre of an old town which was destroyed by a severe flood.

The principal feature of the interior of the town is the bazaar, formed of four streets radiating north and south and east and west from a central dome, the whole of the bazaar being covered in by domed roofs. There are six caravanserais, seven hammams, three mosques and a Madrasseh. The town is well lighted with electric lights, and one or two of the principal garages have got rooms for travellers, but food is not supplied, and the quarters are rather dirty.

The chief importance of Turbat-i-Haidari lay in the fact that it was a meeting place of several routes. At the south-west corner of the valley is the Seistan road, and by the same opening, a somewhat old and waterless road from Teheran reaches the town. A little further to the east, the road to Khaf crosses the southern barrier, while the route to Herat runs due east down the Julagh-i-Zava. At the north-west corner of the valley the road to Meshed crosses the northern range, the motor road going by the Khamari Pass, and from here a road branches to Nishapur.

The climate of Turbat-i-Haidari is exceedingly healthy. It is sometimes colder than Meshed both in winter and summer, and the snowfall is much more considerable. The water-supply is ample, and the water is good. Turbat itself is supplied from a spring fifteen miles distant to the north, and called the Chashmeh-i-Divaneh. The country round about is very fertile, and fruit is plentiful and good ; mulberry trees are abundant.

Turbat was originally the seat of a British and Russian Consulate, but neither of them are there now. It was formerly famous for its silk, which was wound off the cocoons locally, and exported to Meshed and Yezd. There are just a few silk factories in the town. Trade with Afghanistan is very much on the decrease. The greatest amount of trade is with Russia. Baluch nomads bring in carpets which are sent to Meshed ; wheat and barley are cultivated and sent to Nishapur and Sahzewan. Copper utensils are also manufactured here, and there is trade in cotton yarn and twist, woollen fabrics, indigo, tea and copper plates. There are a number of Indian merchants in the town.

Leaving Turbat-i-Haidari, the toll barrier of Ahyalabad is passed, and ten miles further on, the ascent of the Kharsang Pass is made. The original road used to go through the Baider Pass, but that is now abandoned. Slaty rocks abound. Seven miles beyond, the Khumari Pass (Gudar-i-Khumari) is crossed one and a half miles in length. The road runs along the bed of a stream for some distance, and the pass is very narrow. At the foot is the village of Shur Hissar with a poor caravanserai, and in a ruinous condition. Elevation 5,150 feet. The village of Nasr-i-Qurlas is passed at some distance on the left, situated beneath the scarped range of the Kuh-i-Sulaimanieh. This village is noted for the severity of its climate and the cold of Nasr-i-Qurlas is proverbial. Two small villages, Hassanabad and Abbasabad, are left behind, and forty miles from Turbat-i-Haidari commences the ascent of the Mohd. Mirza Pass, altitude 6,400 feet. The road from Turbat-i-Haidari, after crossing the Julagh-i-Rukh, enters this pass, the distance from the entrance to the summit being four miles. The ascent is steady, and at three-quarters of a mile from the summit the small village of Mohd. Mirza, where there is a spring of water, is passed. The road winds through the valley, and at three miles from the top of the pass enters a gorge about forty feet wide and a quarter of a mile long, with hills rising up sheer on either side, and then enters the valley of Safid.

Immediately to the north of the Mohd. Mirza Pass, and slightly to the west of the road in a small valley one and a half miles long by one mile wide

is the village of Baz-i-Hur. It is built on the side of a hill, and there is a plentiful supply of fresh water from a stream. About a mile farther on is the caravanserai of Robat-i-Safid, altitude 5,600 feet.

A steady descent is now made to Kafr Kaleh (4,850 feet). It is a ruined mud fort situated in a narrow valley. The fort is built on the summit of a small hill in the middle of the valley. At the foot of the hill lies a village. There is a good water-supply from the Gulbukra stream. Close by is another village containing a caravanserai called Dasht Ruh.

A run of another eleven miles and Sharifabad, which is only twenty-four miles from Meshed, is reached. It is at an altitude of 4,800 feet and is situated in a hollow on a stream. The hills to the east of the village are called the Kuh-i-Baza, those to the south Kuh-i-Dilbaran, to the west Kuh-i-Bizzhan, and to the north Kuh-i-Bad. The village contains a post-house and two magnificent caravanserais of the Shah Abbas period. One of these, built by Ishaq-Khan Qurai of Turbat-i-Haidari, measures seventy-two by thirty-three yards and has six towers. It was built in A.H. 1224 (A.D. 1760). The other caravanserai, built by Hussain Khan Nizam-ud-Dowleh, a former Governor-General of Khorassan, measures fifty-five by fifty-five yards, has six towers, twenty-two rooms, two private courts and good stabling. There is a small bazaar and supplies are obtainable in considerable quantities. It is the meeting place of nearly all the roads to Meshed from Southern and Western Iran.

An ascent is now made, a toll barrier at Robat Kolambch passed, and twelve miles farther on, the toll barrier of Toroq, and in the distance, glittering in the sun, is the golden dome of the shrine of the Imam Reza and the city of Meshed, the holiest and most immoral city of Iran.

CHAPTER V

MESHED AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Meshed—Elevation 3,104 feet. Population about 80,000.

THE present city sprang into being after A.D. 1389 when the city of Isfahan, founded by Tamerlane, was destroyed after a protracted siege by Miran Shah, son of Tamerlane, and the city was razed to the ground and 10,000 people massacred. The presence of the tomb of the Imam Reza at Sanabad was the cause of the founding of Meshed.

In 1507, the Usbeks captured the city and massacred its inhabitants, and besieged it again in 1525 and retook it. It was retaken by Shah Tahmasp in 1528. In 1544 it was captured by Mohd. Sultan Usbek, and many of the inhabitants put to the sword.

In 1579, and again in 1581, Murtaza Quli Khan, a Governor appointed by Shah Ismail II, unsuccessfully attempted to hold the city against Ali Quli Khan, the guardian of Shah Abbas, whose headquarters it became, before he assumed the reins of government at Kazvin.

In 1589, Abdul Munim Khan, Governor of Balkh, captured Meshed, and a massacre ensued; the shrine was sacked, and its treasures and manuscripts fell into the hands of the victors. In 1598, on the flight of the Usbeks, the city was reoccupied by Shah Abbas, who restored the shrine, and with the sale proceeds of the diamond, presented by Qutub Shah of the Deccan, which was lost in the siege but was restored later on by an Usbek prince, purchased lands on its behalf.

In 1601 Shah Abbas constructed the Khiaban in front of the shrine, and his successors, whenever they came to Meshed, enriched the shrine still more.

Malik Mohd. Sistani, who had occupied Meshed in 1722, sustained a defeat in 1726, for two months against Shah Tahmasp II. The assailants were treacherously admitted into the city, and the Malik captured and put to death.

In 1729 an Abdali Afghan force from Herat laid siege to the town, but Ibrahim Khan, brother of Nadir Shah, succeeded in holding the enemy at bay, till Nadir himself came to the rescue.

In 1749 the Mutavali and guardian of the shrine, Mirza Sayed Mohd., treacherously seized and blinded Shah Rukh, and himself assumed the title of Shah Suleman, only to be blinded in his turn. After the reinstatement of Shah Rukh, his two sons plundered the shrine in turn. Shah Rukh was finally deposed by Aga Muhammad Shah in 1796. About this time Meshed was incessantly raided by Turkomans.

In 1802 Nadir Mirza plundered the shrine, and held the city against the Kajar troops. He was unsuccessful, was captured and sent to Teheran, where he was put to death by the order of Feth Ali Shah.

From 1825 to 1828, the city was constantly raided by the Khan of Khiva, but order was restored by an Iranian force under Abbas Mirza. After twenty years of peace, in 1847 a big rebellion, headed by Hassan Khan Salar, took place. The people turned against him and he was seized in the shrine, where he had fled, and subsequently executed.

In 1868 cholera broke out in the city, followed by a famine three years later. In 1880 the Russian victory at Geogtappéh stopped the Turkoman raids, since when the defences of the city have fallen into disrepair. Two more outbreaks of cholera took place, one in 1892 and the other in 1904.

The main street of Meshed is the Bala Khiaban. Down the centre runs a canal about twelve feet across spanned by foot bridges and planks. On either side of it are planted mulberries, chenars and willows. Then on either side again is the footway, and then the bazaars. The Khiaban is filled with a crowd during the day. Here is seen the Mullah, and the Sayed, looking suspiciously and in an unfriendly way at the traveller; here is found the lemonade seller, the dervish, the merchant and the pilgrim; here are also seen Indians, Afghans, Tartars, Usbegs, Arabs and Bedouins, and many other people of the East.

Half-way down the Bala Khiaban is a garden, and within it is the tomb of the celebrated King, Nadir Shah. A mausoleum recently built covers the supposed tomb. Here, in his lifetime, this great conqueror caused a building to be raised for himself, and for his son Reza Kuli Mirza. The brutal eunuch Agha Mohd. Shah Kajar, never forgetting the injuries inflicted upon him and his family by Nadir Shah and Kerim Khan Zend, ordered the structures to be razed to the ground. The bones of Nadir Shah (along with those of Kerim Khan Zend) were taken to Teheran and deposited beneath the threshold of the palace. Whenever the monarch walked in and out, he had the exquisite pleasure of treading on them.¹

Close to the garden is a Madrasseh, but the unbeliever is not allowed to go inside. The place is full of green-turbaned Sayeds.

At one end of the Bala Khiaban, the passage becomes suddenly barred by an archway with a European clock in the wall, and within is the tomb of the Imam Reza, and also the other sacred buildings of the city neighbourhood. This is the principal sight of Meshed, but before proceeding to describe the shrine, a few words regarding the Imam may not be amiss.

It is related that Alexander the Great (known to the Iranians as Sikan-der Roomi) in the course of his expeditions through the country, came accidentally to this spot, and pitched his tent here. He dreamed a dream which gave him so much uneasiness that he told it to his Vizier Aristotle, and asked him to interpret it. Aristotle declared that hereafter some person of holy origin should be buried there: the King, upon hearing this, marked the spot and ordered four walls to be built round the sacred place.

For hundreds of years the place remained unnoticed and undisturbed, till accidentally one day the Caliph Haroun-Al-Raschid obtained a book of the philosopher Aristotle in which he learnt what Alexander had done; when near his end, he not only left orders that his body should be interred in the holy spot indicated by this sage, but directed that it should be done in such a manner that it might face that of the holy man who was destined to occupy it (who he believed would come of the line of Ali whom he had persecuted with all possible rigour). The Caliph Haroun was warned in a dream not only of his death, but also of the place where he should be interred. He moved near the place that his orders might be the more easily carried out, and when he died he was buried accordingly.

During the reign of his son and successor, Mamoun-Al-Raschid, the fame of the Imam Reza (among those of the sect of Ali) grew rapidly, and

¹ After his death, the bones of Kerim Khan were re-interred.

his followers multiplied so rapidly that the jealousy of the Caliph, who held his court at Merv, was aroused; he determined to rid himself of a dangerous rival, and under the pretence of distinguished regard, inveigled him to Tus in Khorassan, where he was detained for several years in honourable confinement, and restrained from so unlimited an intercourse as he had hitherto enjoyed, and from entertaining so large a body of disciples and dependents.

A strong and secret party was formed for the Imam; the fact of their existence reached the ears of the Caliph who determined to get rid of him without delay. He asked the Imam to visit him, and directed his Vizier to put before him a plate of grapes, the finest of which had been poisoned. To make assurance doubly sure, the king with his own hands presented him with a few of the poisoned grapes, which, thus honoured, he could not refuse to eat. He immediately felt he was poisoned, and covering his face with his Arab cloak, rose to retire. "Whither go you?" asked Mamum. "Thither, where you have sent me," replied the man. He went out, called to one of his faithful servants, and said, "Abu Selt, this day I am going to die; you know the Caliph Haroun on his death-bed charged his son to bury him in such a manner that his body might be in face of mine. But this must not be; the place of my repose shall be indicated by these signs: when you shall have dug in the appointed spot, a fountain shall spring up therein, and in it there shall be many fish, both small and large, but one larger than the rest, and having a golden ring in his nose; he shall devour the others and drink the fountain dry, after which he shall himself disappear. In that place, bury my body." He died soon afterwards, and his servants buried his body according to his directions, and it came to pass that the feet of the Imam were placed towards the head of the Caliph, and both were buried within the four walls built by Sikander Roomi¹.

In A.D. 1037 during the reign of Sultan Masmud Ghaznavi, the dome of the shrine was built, and some fortifications erected by Suri, Governor of Nishapur. The town was plundered in 1611, but the shrine spared.

In 1296, soon after the accession of Gazan, great-grandson of Hulagu Khan, Daud, son of Barah, a Tartar prince sacked Meshed and Khorassan.

In 1418, Shah Rukh made a pilgrimage, and presented the shrine with a golden candelabrum. The mosque close by the shrine built by his wife Gauhar Shah was completed in the same year. Every subsequent prince enriched the shrine, and in 1818, Feth Ali Shah visited the city, and built the court of the shrine, the Sahn-i-Nau.

To return to the description of the shrine. Immediately beyond the barrier the street continues to run through a crowded bazaar for about a hundred yards. The place is intensely crowded as a rule, especially at the pilgrimage season. This is known as the Bast or sanctuary. As it belongs to the Imam, it is holy ground, and many a criminal had taken refuge in olden days in this inviolable sanctuary. From gate to gate, the Bast must be about quarter mile.

In the Bast is a Madrasseh,² erected by the munificence of Mirza Jaffer, a wealthy Iranian merchant who had made his money in India. It resembles the mosques in decorations and features. It was endowed with large revenues, which supported fifty or sixty Mullahs. In this area is also a refectory, where pilgrims are fed at the expense of His Highness. There are also other Madrassehs, lodging houses, and baths.

¹ Fraser, "Journey into Khorasan."

² A school.

At the end of the bazaar an archway leads into the Sahn or the principal courtyard of the buildings. It is a quadrangle 150 yards long by 75 yards wide flagged by gravestones. In the centre of this quadrangle is a small octagonal kiosk, with a gilded roof, and surrounded by a stone channel for water constructed by Shah Abbas. The water is used for ablution. The walls on all the four sides have enamelled tiles, and in the centre of each are archways set in a rectangular frame. These arches are also decorated with tiles which bear in Cufic characters, verses from the Koran.

An inscription in the southern archway says that it was built by Shah Abbas II in A.H. 1059. The lower bands of Cufic characters were added in A.H. 1262. On the top of the western archway is a cage from which the Muezzin gives the call to prayer.

The upper half of the eastern archway is gilded, and it leads to the tomb chamber of the Imam. An inscription says that it was built by Shah Sultan Hussain in A.H. 1085, and gilded by Nadir Shah in A.H. 1145.

The Sahn contains two minarets, the older minaret being built by Shah Ismail or Shah Tahmasp. It had been taken down and rebuilt. The other minaret was built by Nadir Shah. Both these minarets are gilded and crowned with a cage-like gallery.

Entering the eastern archway, we come into a spacious chamber with a marble floor overlaid with carpets. The tomb itself is exactly under the gilded cupola which is seventy-seven feet high. The walls of the chamber are adorned with enamelled tiles, and have Arabic writing on them. "The walls are adorned with the rarest trinkets, and jewels: here are aigrette of diamonds, there a sword and shield studded with rubies and emeralds, rich old bracelets, large massive candelabra, and necklaces of immense value."¹

The tomb itself is surrounded with railings of gold, silver and steel. The first was set up by Shah Tahmasp, but was taken down and plundered by the grandson of Nadir Shah. The last was given by Nadir himself. Three doors lead to the shrine, one of which is of silver, another of gold plates studded with precious stones, the gift of Feth Ali Shah; the third is covered with a carpet sewn with pearls. Upon the railings are hung silver and wooden tablets inscribed with forms of prayer. The pilgrim when he goes in barefooted has to repeat his prayers after a leader who is posted there. He then walks on all four sides and kisses the fretwork of the grating, the pavement, and the padlock which hangs from the door. Mullahs hover round for baksheesh. The man who pays a pilgrimage to this shrine earns for himself the title of Meshedi, which is always prefixed to his name, and which he has inscribed on his signet and his tombstone.

Close by is another sarcophagus containing the remains of the Caliph Haroon-al-Raschid. Beneath the same roof is also the tomb of Abbas Mirza, the son of Feth Ali Shah.

The books inside the shrine are invaluable. The date of the library is about the time of Shah Rukh, a Koran being deposited in his reign. Shah Abbas and Shah Sultan Hussain contributed their share towards it. Nadir Shah, although a Sunni himself, presented the shrine with 400 manuscripts. "A catalogue was made in 1858, and the library then contained 2,997 works in 3,654 volumes, of which 1,041 were Korans (852 being manuscripts) of rare beauty, 299 prayer books and guides to pilgrims, 264 works on ecclesiastical law and 221 on that of the Shia persuasion."

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

The miracles ascribed to the Imam Reza and his shrine are many, some of which I append below.

An unbeliever went in disguise inside the shrine. When he reached the tomb of the Imam, he was split into two longitudinal halves and killed instantly. People then put the two halves in a balance and found that the weight was exactly the same as when the man was alive ! The loss of blood at being split into two had not decreased the man's weight. Thus he was punished by the Imam for desecrating his shrine. I informed the man who told me the story that a European had been in disguise to Mecca, and nothing happened to him, and the answer came straightaway, " Oh, but Mecca is the place of God, and anybody can visit that, for the house of God is open to all, but this is the tomb of our holy Imam."

It is said that a camel belonging to a cruel master once took refuge in the shrine. This poor animal which had done its duty long and faithfully, and though old and unfit for service was being most unmercifully treated by its master, escaped from its keeper while in Meshed, passed the iron-chain which excludes passengers on horseback, reached the tomb of the Imam and sat down before the silver gate. The Khadims tried in vain to drive it away, but the noise created, attracted the notice of the Chief Mullah who forbade them to molest the animal which had come to make its complaint to the Holy Imam. The owner being questioned could not deny that he had overloaded and ill-treated the camel. The Mullah told the man that as he valued his own safety, he must release the animal from servitude. The owner alarmed, signified his willingness to do so, and to give it to any person who would receive it. Upon which the camel, as if it had understood the words, arose and suffered itself to be led from the shrine, and the Mullah himself took care of it till it died.

Three hundred years after the death of the Imam Reza when Sultan Sanjar reigned at Merv, the son of his Chief Minister became infected with leprosy. The young man was sent away to travel. By chance he reached Meshed, and while hunting there one day, the stag which he was pursuing took refuge within the four walls built by the great Sikander, and which were then all that remained to indicate the last resting-place of Haroun and the Imam Reza. The young man attempted to follow, but his horse resisted all efforts, and would not enter ; he then felt convinced that something holy must be in the place. He sprang from his horse, prostrated himself on the ground, and prayed to God that the event might be propitious to him. When he arose, he found that his prayers had been answered, and that the disease had left him.

One other miracle will suffice. A native of Kandahar who came to Meshed on a pilgrimage, was smitten with a strong desire to possess himself of part of the rich treasure belonging to the shrine. Dazzled by a rich gold and jewelled censer in which perfumes were usually burnt, he resolved upon purloining it. For this purpose, he first became a resident in the town, and afterwards got admission as a humble servant of the shrine where he soon distinguished himself by his zeal and activity. Having lulled suspicion, he entered the shrine one night by climbing one of the buildings within its precincts, from which he ascended the dome, and let himself down by a rope through an opening into the body of the place. He then seized the object of his desire and was running away, when a voice from the dome called aloud to him to beware ; that if he wanted to plunder, he should content himself with something less valuable, and not deprive the shrine of a jewel the loss of which will bring heavy blame on many of its servants. The fellow exclaimed, " What ! Shall I, after sacrificing more than a year's labour for this one object, throw it from me when it is within my reach ? No ! I

will dare everything, and take it with me." No further voice was heard, but when he went to the rope by which he had ascended, he found that it had become shorter; he brought a ladder used for lighting the candles, keeping the censer concealed under his arm: but he had not climbed far, when the rope broke, and he fell to the ground and broke his back. He was found in the morning by the Chief Mullah to whom he confessed the whole story, and who ordered him into custody. On the morrow, however, the Mullah related to the priests of the shrine that the saint had appeared to him in a dream, and told him not to harm the culprit as his punishment had been sufficient. He was therefore dismissed, but the irritation of the populace was so great that they seized him and cut his hands off.¹

Close by the shrine is the mosque of Gauhar Shad, with a dome covered with blue and green tiles and loftier than that of the Imam Reza. It has two tiled minarets, and a large court with two storeys of recessed compartments, and tile-covered aiwans. An inscription on the main facade says that it was erected in the reign of Shah Rukh in A. H. 821. A similar panel on the southern aiwan records its reconstruction by Shah Sultan Hussain in A. H. 1087.

The shrine of the Imam is so holy that people considered it an honour to be buried here, and corpses of pious Shahs were brought from all over the world, and especially from India, and buried here as well as in Qum and Kerbela. The practice has been stopped now.

Like most holy places, Meshed too has its sordid side, and Lord Curzon calls it "the most immoral city in Asia." Temporary marriages are the rule here as in all Iran, and convenience in that department is given to the pilgrims who visit the shrine. A contract is legally drawn up, the fee paid to a Mullah, and the union is accomplished. After the lapse of the specified period, the marriage is terminated, the pilgrim with the appellation of "Meshedi", returns to his native land, and the lady parasite after a period of enforced celibacy attaches herself to the next host that comes her way, another contract being legally drawn up.

I have already mentioned that a canal runs through the middle of the Bala Khiaban. It is known as the Chasmeh-i-Gilas, and the stream takes its origin from the Kuh-i-Radkan in the Elburz range. Just above the spring at the foot of the hill are the ruins of a large palace built of bricks and stone. The water of the Chasmeh is remarkably pure and clear, and stones are visible at a depth of twelve feet, but the water gets muddy and dirty before it reaches Meshed. The water from the spring collects in a large basin about twenty feet deep, made by an ancient dam constructed to raise the water to a high level, and divert it towards the old town of Tus. About A.D. 1490 Amir Ali Shij, the Prime Minister of Sultan Hussain Baikara, built a canal, and made the water of the Chasmeh flow through it to Meshed. A mile below the modern village of Amirabad, all the water is drawn off into the canal, runs down to Meshed by the Pain Khiaban gate, and on to Turuq.

Close to the Bala Khiaban in one of the side streets is the "Carpet King", the man who makes carpets for the Shah. They have extremely pretty designs, and the stitch is very fine. The price varies from 1,000 toman² a zar to 2,000 toman.

Outside the Bala Khiaban gate is one of the cemeteries, the final resting-place of corpses that have been carried for thousands of miles, and transported thither.

¹ Fraser, "Journey into Khorasan."

² A toman in 1929 was worth Rs. 2-12-0.

Not far from the cemetery, and outside the walls of the city is the new Civil Hospital, recently built. It is a big airy place, well equipped with all the latest appliances. The general health of the people on the whole is good, but the constitution is undermined by spirit drinking, opium eating and smoking. Outbreaks of cholera, plague and diphtheria have occurred, and small-pox, measles, whooping cough and mumps are common. An epidemic of sore throat occasionally visits the city. It spreads rapidly and causes a high mortality. Typhoid fever is endemic. Malaria is very common especially in the summer and autumn months. Tuberculosis is widespread, and also venereal disease.

Some of the commonest disorders are eye disorders, diseases due to dirt and neglect, and also trachoma. Loss of eyesight due to small-pox is frequently met with.

Oriental sore is met with. Functional disorders of the heart are frequently met with amongst the upper classes on account of excessive smoking and drinking. Acute and chronic Bright's disease and ascites are occasionally seen.

To the south of the hospital is the orphans' home. The place is run by a matron and a staff of nurses, and the orphans are fed and clothed at Government expense.

Close to it is the Firdausi Club, a fairly big building, which contains a gymnasium in addition to tennis courts, etc., showing the progressive tendency of the modern Iran.

The bazaars of Meshed are large and well covered, but there is very little of interest to be found in them. The famous turquoise from the mines near Nishapur are bought at the mouth of the mines and exported to foreign countries. The traveller who is rash enough to go personally and buy turquoise in the bazaar will get the rubbish from the mines, or imitation turquoise which will be sold to him at an exorbitant price. Old Bactrian or Iranian coins cannot be found in the bazaar. Silks and velvet stuffs are made here, but of an inferior quality. There is a branch of the Oriental Carpet Manufactory in the bazaar. Carved objects, cups and bowls hollowed out of a soft slate, and of either a dull reddish brown, or a blue grey colour are also found, but they are not worth looking at.

The Ark or Citadel stands in the portion of the city from which it is separated by a large parade ground. It is defended by a circuit of low walls and towers. It is here that the Governor resides.

Meshed is the seat of a British and Russian Consulate-General. There are many small hotels in Meshed. Passes are required from the Police to leave the city.

Two very interesting excursions can be made from Meshed :

I

To Tus and back—Half-day excursion.

About fifteen miles from Meshed in a north-westerly direction are the ruins of Tus. A good motor road runs all the way. The ruins are entered on the south-western side by a bridge¹ over the Kashaf Rud. The bridge is seventy feet long and has eight arches, and is in a fairly good state of preservation.

¹ See illustration on page 26.

Not far from the bridge is the tomb of Khoja Rabbi. The dome and walls of the mausoleum are ancient, but the whole of the ornamental work was added by Shah Abbas. Khoja Rabbi was a friend and officer of Ali, but related to Muawiyeh. When war was about to commence between Ali and Muawiyeh, Khoja Rabbi solicited his master not to subject him to the disgrace and pain of being obliged to fight against his relation. Ali granted the petition, and ordered him to reduce the Kaffirs of Turkestan, but he died at Tus, and was buried in the place where his tomb now stands. The tomb has the form of a square with its corners cut off, so as to form an octagon with four large and four small sides in the former of which are arched entrances; its large dome as well as the external walls, were once adorned with lacquered tiles of a handsome pattern; but the interior was much more beautiful. The lower five feet of the walls were covered with tiles of rich pattern; above which, a larger space was occupied by clusters of flowers richly gilt divided into compartments, and a broad band of Arabic inscriptions in gold letters upon a dark azure ground ran round the wall; and the rest of the building with dome was magnificently decorated with gilded flowers and fanciful devices on an azure ground. The interior is still in a fair state of preservation. The building is mostly of brick, with the exception of the door and archways which are made of the dark grey Meshed stone, which is easy to work and preserves its sharpness.

The fortifications of Tus are about four miles in circumference. The lines of the old wall mark a nearly perfect rectangular figure. The ark or citadel has a wide deep ditch, and a rampart sixty to seventy feet high. In the interior is a high keep, surrounded also by a ditch, and giving a good view of the place. The outer line forms a square of about three hundred yards a side. There are remains of forts at the south and north angle of the city wall. The site of old buildings can also be seen by a line of debris radiating from the central buildings.

To the north-east is a mound surrounded by a deep trench, where excavations were taking place. This was pointed out as the grave of the great epic poet, Firdausi, who wrote the Shah Nameh. The real grave of Firdausi¹ however is outside the city walls, in an insignificant place, in a field of wheat. There is no name and no date on it.

II

A very interesting excursion from Meshed can be made to the Chasmeh-i-Sabz. It takes about three days and back, and has to be done on horseback. Food and tentage have to be carried all the way. It is easier to do the trip from Nishapur.

The Chasmeh-i-Sabz is a little lake in a basin north-east of Nishapur, thirteen miles from Gulmakan, and forty-eight miles from Meshed. The best road is from Nishapur via Buzan (about twelve miles), and thence to the spring about sixteen miles. The road from Gulmakan leads up the valley of the stream the whole way. The journey can be accomplished in about four and a half hours. Baggage mules take longer. Gardens and plantations are passed for three miles, and beyond that there is nothing but a line of willows. The ascent is gradual the whole way. Gulmakan is at an altitude of 4,600 feet, while Chasmeh-i-Sabz is about 7,700 feet. The last two miles are the steepest. There are no trees and shade, but plenty of firewood can be got. Supplies must be taken from Gulmakan, for near the Chasmeh-i-Sabz there are no habitations at all.

¹ A new mausoleum has now been built.

There is no doubt that the Chasmeh-i-Sabz is a very ancient lake, and that it was much larger in former times than it is to-day. A guide points out the edge of the former shore, and it is said that the basin in which it is situated was surrounded by hills on all sides, and full of deep water which overflowed into the ravine leading towards Gulmakan. The water forced out a channel between the hills, which has reduced it to its present level.

The lake is extremely picturesque, and is about four hundred yards in length, and one hundred and fifty in breadth surrounded by lofty mountains to the east, south and west. It contains a lot of small fish, and the water flows down to Gulmakan, irrigating the fields and gardens belonging to that village.

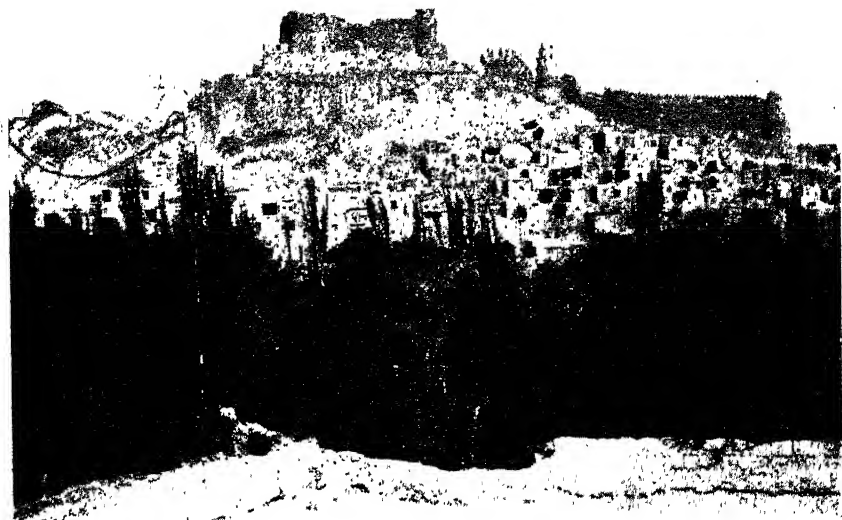
The chief interest however of Chasmeh-i-Sabz is the legend connected with it. The Sassanian King Yezdezird I (A.D. 399 A.D. 419) known as Yezdezard-al-Athim or Yezdezird the Wicked, whenon the throne very nearly embraced Christianity and persecuted the Magians, and the professors of his old religion. At a later time, fearful of provoking rebellion among his Zoroastrian subjects, he turned round on all the Christians and treated them with a cruelty exceeding that previously exhibited towards the Zoroastrians.

One day, while in the full vigour of manhood, a horse of rare beauty, uncaparisoned and without a bridle came of its own accord, and stopped in front of the King's palace. The King was informed, and gave orders that the steed should be saddled and bridled. The animal kicked and reared and would not allow anyone to come near, till the King himself approached, when the animal became gentle and docile, and allowed the bridle and saddle to be put on. The crupper needed adjustment, and Isdigerd (Yezdezird) proceeded to finish his task, when the horse suddenly lashed out with one of his hind legs, and dealt the King a blow which killed him on the spot. The animal disencumbered itself of its accoutrements and galloped away never to be seen again. The Iranians at the time regarded it an answer to their prayers, and saw the hand of God in it.

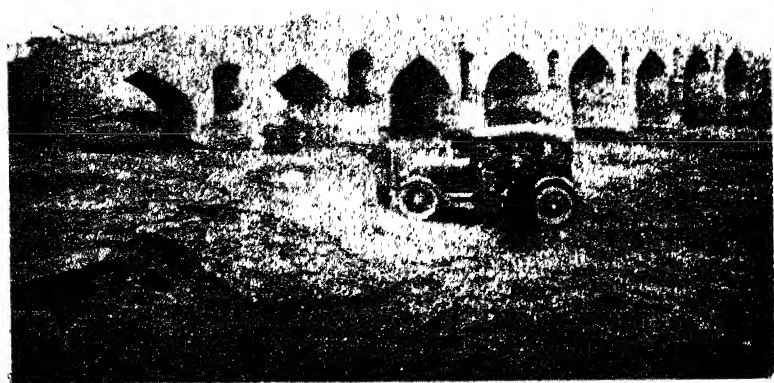
Tradition says that this white horse came from the Chasmeh-i-Sabz, and after doing its work disappeared therein.

III

From Meshed a good motor road leads to Bujnurd and Kuchan, but the cities were laid low by an earthquake in 1929, and completely destroyed.



FURG—GENERAL VIEW.



By kind permission of the Iran League.
ANCIENT BRIDGE—TUS.

CHAPTER VI

FROM MESHED TO TEHERAN

Meshed to Sabzewar

THE journey can be done very comfortably in four days or even three, the first day from Meshed to Sabzewar, the second from Sabzewar to Shahrud, the third from Shahrud to Semnan and the fourth from Semnan to Teheran.

The road from Meshed to Nishapur is quite good. Seven miles after leaving Meshed, the road gets to the base of the mountains, the south-eastern extremity of the Binalud Kuh, which separates the plain of Meshed from that of Nishapur.

The first place of interest passed on the way is Qadamgah, fifty-four miles from Meshed, at an altitude of 4,400 feet. The tradition is that the Imam Reza halted here on his way to Tus, and in order to convince local fire-worshippers of his superiority, left the imprint of his foot on a black stone, which became a place of pilgrimage ever afterwards. Hence the name Qadamgah, the place of the step. On this spot, Shah Suleiman erected a mosque with a blue-tiled dome which is so conspicuous from a distance. The mosque stands on a raised platform at the upper end of a large garden watered by a clear stream and having a magnificent avenue of cedar trees. Inside the mosque is a single chamber entered by a covered archway, and covered by the blue dome. The chamber contains a stone with the imprint of the Imam Reza's foot on it, a foot of more than ordinary size.

In the garden the stream flows down the roadway past a row of pines. The seeds and cones from which these pines sprang are said to have been brought by a pilgrim from the Himalayas nearly four hundred years ago.

The village consists mostly of Sayeds, and has a caravanserai and a post-house.

On a hill about six hundred feet above the plain is the fort of Qadamgah, and opposite the fort on a hill is a fortress now in ruins, which in former times was the site of the village of Qadamgah. It is said that about two hundred and fifty years ago, it was ransacked by the Usbeks, who seized a large number of Sayed families, and deported them to Bokhara. Their descendants are still said to be found there.

Soon after leaving Qadamgah, commences the famous plain of Nishapur, whose wonders are expressed in multiples of the number twelve. It was said to have twelve mines of turquoise, copper, lead, antimony, iron, salt, marble and soapstone; twelve ever running streams from the hills; 1,200 villages and 12,000 kanats flowing from 12,000 springs.¹ The traveller who expects to see all this will be greatly disappointed, for all this glory has gone for good. The plain, however, is fertile, the chief local products being rice, opium and tobacco.

Nishapur—Elevation 4,000 feet. Population 11,000

About fifty-six miles from Meshed is situated the town of Nishapur. Its walls and minarets can be seen from a distance.

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

Nishapur, known as "The Niysaya or Nissa," blessed by Ormuzd, the birthplace of the Dionysos of Greek legend, was one of the paradises of Iran.¹ Its legendary founder was Tehmurasp, the third king of the Peshadian dynasty and the fourth in descent from Noah. The town was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and rebuilt by Shapur I (A.D. 240-261) who here erected a huge statue of himself, which remained standing till the Mahomedan invasion, but the town of Shapur covers a square mile of ground to the south-east of the present town. The mounds commence about a mile from the town wall, and extend towards the Mabrukh's grave, and northwards as far as the high road to Qadamgah.

In the fifteenth century, A.D., Nishapur was an important place, for Yezdezird II (A.D. 438-457) generally resided there, and the Armenian patriarch Joseph, and many bishops and priests were taken by him to Nishapur and there killed. Nishapur is seldom mentioned in the history of the later Sassanians, and when the Arabs first came to Khorassan, it was an unimportant place. Merv being then the capital. Under the Taheride dynasty (A.H. 258-259; A.D. 820-872), Nishapur rose again. Abu Tahiri ibn-i-Husain, the first Sultan of the Tahiri dynasty, who died in A.D. 822, built a palace at Nishapur. Toghrul Beg, the first ruler of the Seljuk dynasty, made Nishapur his residence in A.D. 1037, and brought it to the zenith of its splendour. It was reckoned one of the four cities of the Empire of Khorassan.¹ It was then supposed to have had forty-four quarters, fifty main streets, a splendid mosque and a world-famed library. His son King Alparslan had the palace of Shadiakh built for his son Malik Shah on the occasion of the latter's marriage with the daughter of the great Khan in the year A.D. 1072. Arslan Arghun, a brother of Malik Shah, destroyed the fortress Kuhandiz, in 1096, and in A.D. 1153 when Sultan Sanjar reigned over Khorassan, the Turkomans overran the country and destroyed the town and suburb, and massacred many of the inhabitants. The city was so completely ravaged that the inhabitants on returning could not discover the sites of their own homes. One of Sanjar's Mameliks, Al-Muaziz Aina, expelled the Turkomans in A.D. 1159, and occupied Nishapur. In A.D. 116, to put an end to the continual quarrels between Sunni and Shiah sectarians of Nishapur, Muyaid had the leaders of the parties executed, destroyed all mosques and colleges and burnt all libraries. Shah Diakh became his residence and Nishapur became a suburb. After the death of Muyaid in 1174, near Khavarezm, till the beginning of the thirteenth century, Nishapur is hardly mentioned. In the year 1208, a terrible earthquake destroyed the town. In A.D. 1220 the hordes of Chengiz Khan under the command of his son Tului Khan destroyed the city with fire and sword; the city fell after three days' assault. 1,740,000 people were supposed to have been slain. Historians relate that the daughter of Chengiz Khan had to revenge herself on the Nishapuris for having killed her husband Taghajar, had the town levelled to the ground so completely that a horse could not ride over the ground without stumbling. The city was converted into a vast barley field. Nishapur was soon after rebuilt, but destroyed partly by Mongols in 1269, and by another earthquake in 1280. From this time the town fell a prey successively to Mongols, Tartars, Turkomans and Afghans who reduced it to one vast ruin. In 1747, on the death of Nadir Shah, it was besieged by Ahmed Abdali, the Afghan, and after a six-months' siege was taken by him, and the Turkish chieftain Abbas Kuli Khan, whose sister he had married, was made ruler of the city. About this time, the town was energetically rebuilt. In 1796 it passed into the hands of Agha Mohammed Shah, and became an appanage of the Iranian crown.

¹ The others were Merv, Balkh and Herat.

The circumference of the modern town forms an irregular quadrangle. Two principal streets—one north to south, the other east to west—intersect each other at right angles in the middle of the town. The bazaar is situated where the two principal streets intersect. The gates are—

- (1) Darwazeh-i-Iraq on the south side, and from it leads the road to Teheran and Iraq.
- (2) Darwazeh-i-Meshed on the east from where the Meshed road goes.
- (3) Darwazeh-i-Iraq, to the north on the road to Mirabad.
- (4) Darwazeh-i-Pachinar on the road to Kuchan.

The motor road to Teheran from Meshed runs outside the city walls.

There is one mosque inside the town known as the Masjid-i-Jama, dating from the reign of the Sefavi dynasty. A mutilated inscription on the gateway gives the date A.H. 1042 (A.D. 1632-33), an inscription on a small stone inside the mosque says that Shah Abbas I endowed the mosque with a piece of ground in the year A.H. 1022 (1612-13). The town has eleven public baths, with water supplied from Mirabad, and canals: two Madrassahs, two caravanserais inside the town, one named Serai Mohammed Husain Mustafi, and the other Serai Haji Reza; while outside the town is another caravanserai built by Shah Abbas the Great. The majority of the inhabitants are Sayeds.

About two miles to the south-east of the Iraq Gate is a fine garden with the grave of Imamzadeh Muhammad, a brother of the Imam Reza, who is known as Mohammed Mahrukh "the Burnt" because he was burnt by the order of Yazid-ibn-i-Mahhalleh, Governor of Khorassan in the eighth century. The tomb consists of a square building with a dome originally covered with Kashani work, which has now dropped off. It was built by Shah Tahmasp of the Sefavi dynasty, but has been repaired in later times.

In the burial-ground close to the principal enclosure to the south is a tomb marked by a stone pillar, bearing a long Iranian inscription. It is the tomb of Sheikh Furreed-ud-Din Uttar, a celebrated derwish or Sufi in his day. He was not only remarkable for his sanctity, but also for his wealth and his munificence. His substance was gradually expended in donations, and he was forced to assume the garb of a derwish, taking with him a gold and jewelled drinking cup, the only valuable property that remained to him. On leaving his house, he met a person who inquired of him the way to the house of the Sheikh. The Sheikh told him that he was the very man, but was no longer rich and had no house nor home, nor any worldly possessions except the cup, and he besought him to have it, as the last and only thing he could give.

In the days when the city was destroyed by Tului Khan, the son of Chengiz Khan, the Sheikh Uttar was made prisoner, and sold with the rest of the inhabitants. While in the market-place, the sum of seven hundred tomans was demanded for him from a Turkoman who was purchasing slaves. The buyer thought the price exorbitant and remonstrated, but the Sheikh cried out, "Give it, Give it, I am worth more money"; upon hearing this, the Turkoman made the purchase. Some time after, when the country was distressed by famine, the Sheikh was again exposed for

sale by his master : and an old man who sold barley and straw, observing him, offered a bundle of straw in exchange for him. "Take it," cried the Sheikh to his master, "I am worth no more." "How?" asked his master in a rage, "Did you not tell me before that you were worth more than seven hundred tomans, and am I thus deceived? No, I will not take this man's offer, but you shall die for your treachery." So saying he drew his sword and cut off the Sheikh's head; but no sooner had it rolled to the ground than the body, taking it up, ran a mile to the spot where the tomb now is, and with its own finger for a pen, and its own blood for ink, wrote upon a stone the epitaph which has since been engraved upon the tomb. This tomb when originally built by one Mir Ali Sher was more considerable. All that now remains is a small oblong enclosure of brickwork, and the upright slab of black marble on which the epitaph is engraved. This stone was fixed into another as a pedestal, with a quantity of molten lead. Some neighbouring villagers stole the lead and broke the lower stone; but they never thrived afterwards, and in a short time they and their families were dead: the rest of the villagers took heed from the warning and restored the lead.¹

Close by the tomb of the Imamzadeh Mohd. is a small building in which lie the remains of Omar Khayyam, the great Iranian astronomer-poet, so well-known to the English. The poet flourished in the days of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Prime Minister of the Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah. The Vizier, the well known Hassan Sabbah, to be mentioned hereafter, and the poet Omar were school fellows, and during the days of their youth, entered into a mutual agreement that whoever of the three should first arrive at riches and power, should share his good fortune with his two companions. Nizam-ul-Mulk succeeded to the Vizierate on the death of his father. Hassan Sabbah went to see his old friend, but scornfully refused any favour saying he would carve out his own fortune. Omar Khayyam, fond of poetry and ease, also went to him and claimed the benefit of their mutual promise, and said, "Place me in a situation, where I may live in comfort, and enjoy wine in abundance to inspire my muse." The Vizier gave him the district of Nishapur, celebrated for its fruits and wines, and here the poet lived and died and was buried. There is no inscription even to mark the poet's name. These three tombs are enclosed in a neglected garden, which once contained flower-beds, fountains and rivulets of water, but which is now in a sad state of decay. A few fruit trees, and six very fine old pines are all that is left.

About three hundred miles north-west of Nishapur are the famous turquoise mines of Madan. The mines are situated in a district of about forty square miles in extent, rich in mineral deposits, and also containing a lead mine, a salt mine and sandstone quarries. The turquoises are found in a range of hills consisting of porphyries and green stone and sandstone and limestone, at an altitude between 5,000 and 5,800 feet. They are obtained by blasting and digging in the mines proper, or by search among the debris of old mines, and among the debris washed down the hill sides on to the plain. The best turquoises are sold to dealers who export them to Europe. Even by going to the pit-mouth it is impossible to get valuable stones at a moderate price.

Immediately after leaving Nishapur the road gets very bad, and passes through a kavir (or salt desert) and the short run to Sabzewar takes nearly four and a half hours. Fifteen miles from Nishapur, the caravanserai of Zaminabad is passed situated among corn-fields and surrounded by a mud wall, a big, strongly-built bridge over the Shurab is crossed and the road then goes by a low pass into the hills. The plain of Nishapur is separated by these hills from the plain of Sabzewar, a thousand feet lower. At

¹ Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

twenty-five miles, the little village of Shurab, which contains a few houses with gardens and good water, is passed. It stands at an elevation of 4,333 feet and has a post-house and magnificent caravanserai built by the Mustashar-ul-Mulk, Vizier of Khorassan.

The mouth of the pass is known as the Dehaneh-i-Sang-i-Qilidar, and is about thirty miles from Sabzewar. It has about fifteen houses, and an old dilapidated caravanserai repaired a long time ago by the late Hashmat-ud-Dowleh, and is situated just where the Nishapur-Sabzewar road comes out of the hills. Close by the caravanserai is a kava khaneh (or coffee house) where shelter can be had for the night and light refreshments obtained. The place is small but clean, and water is plentiful. The village was founded here in 1840, by Allah Yar Khan, Asaf-ud-Dowleh, in order to make the road safe against the Turks of Bujnurd, who for some time occupied the pass. Families from the Sang-i-Qilidar village, which is situated five miles to the south-east of the pass, were brought to the new village, and paid by Government.

Soon after leaving the Dehaneh-i-Sang-i-Qilidar, seven mounds, the graves of seven criminals, are passed on the right-hand side. They are of the same type as those seen in Birjand.

The road now goes along the Sabzewar plain. The caravanserai of Zafarani is passed on the right about twenty-one miles east of Sabzewar. There was once a magnificent caravanserai here supposed to be the largest in Iran, and there is a legend of a certain rich merchant who while building the caravanserai mixed the bricks with saffron which he had bought out of charity from a poor man. It was from this that the caravanserai obtained the name of Zafarani (saffron). As time went on, the merchant fell into difficulties, and became a beggar. He travelled in search of subsistence into foreign parts, and chanced to visit the place where the saffron merchant, now very rich, lived on the profits of its fortunate sale. It came to the ears of the latter that a poor stranger who spoke of his former estate and deeds of charity was living in abject misery in the town; suspecting that this was his old benefactor, he invited him to his house, and after giving him a good meal, made him relate his story. When the unhappy fellow described his destitute condition, the other said, "How can you call yourself poor, when you are in reality a man possessed of great riches?" The other replied, "Once indeed I had great wealth, but all that has gone; I am now a beggar." His host showed him a secret chamber full of money. "This," said he, "is all yours. It is the price of the saffron you so liberally purchased from me. I have traded upon it and become rich, but the original sum itself, I have always reserved as belonging to you. Take it now and be happy."¹

The caravanserai is a dismal-looking place in a large plain, and the only object that is raised above the surface for miles. There is no cultivation near it. It is said that when in perfect repair, it contained 1,700 chambers, a set of baths, and an establishment of shops within its walls. It could accommodate thousands of men and cattle. Upon its ruins a fine modern caravanserai was built by Nasr-ed-Din Shah in 1868. It has twenty-six good rooms on the ground floor, and eight rooms above, and good stabling.

The caravanserai years ago was a haunt of thieves and bandits and many are the grim stories related of this lonely spot. One of them is the following:—A Turkish horseman, a man of war, was going to Meshed, and

1 Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

halted in this caravanserai, and while eating his evening meal in a half-ruined chamber, a human hand, freshly severed from the arm, was thrown upon his tablecloth from an opening above. The Turk exclaimed. "What scoundrel wants to spoil my dinner!" Immediately a head, ghastly and bleeding, followed the hand. The Turk got more annoyed and said, "Damn these fellows. Can't they let me eat my meal in quietness. What do they want?" A foot was dropped next, and the man was so angry he swore he would be revenged on the whole gang. He finished his dinner and mounted his horse, put the dismembered members in his bag, and went out; forty armed horsemen attacked him, but the Turk resisted their attacks, and wounded so many of the robbers that they disappeared and left him to continue his journey in peace.¹

After the death of Nadir Shah trouble followed and many a caravan was plundered here and many a man murdered. The hills behind gave shelter to the robbers.

Continuing along the plain, the two minarets of Sabzewar become visible, and the town with its mud walls is passed. The motor road goes outside the walls, and on the western side is a garage owned by the firm of Sirdar Mota Singh, where very comfortable quarters can be got for the night.

Sabzewar

The city is of great antiquity, and its legendary foundation is attributed to Sassan, the son of Behman, from whom were descended the Sassanian Kings. Historically, it is stated to be built by the Seljuk dynasty. It was destroyed by Mohammed Shah of Khavarezmi and this conqueror, who was a Sunni, persecuted the Shiah. It is said that his cruelties and persecutions had destroyed the greater part of the population of Sabzewar, when the remainder came before him, threw themselves at his feet, begged for mercy on the plea that many were in reality Sunnis. He reproached them for telling lies, and insisted on their bringing proofs in support of their assertions, which was impossible for them to do. At last he told them that if in the whole city a single person who had the Sunni name of Abu Bekr be brought before him, he would spare the city and its inhabitants for his sake. The people went away in despair for they knew that such a name had never been given to anyone in the city. At last they found a wretched creature, blind and crippled and stuttering, whom they required to go with them before the King. "How shall I go," said the poor fellow, "I can neither see my way, nor walk, and if the King ask my name, I cannot speak it plain," "Oh, never mind, you shall be carried, and if you can only satisfy the King, you shall be taken care of for life." The wretched creature was accordingly carried before the King. "What!" said the King at last, "is this the only Abu Bekr you have to produce? This will never do." "Then," replied the deputies, "Your Majesty must even use your pleasure with your servants, for they have not a better Abu Bekr to lay at your feet." The King laughed and consented to spare the remnants of the Sabzewarees.²

After the destruction by Mohammed Shah Sabzewar became the seat of a race of independent sovereigns for forty years. Timur when he overran Khorassan in A.H. 783 (A.D. 1380) completed the work of destruction. It never regained its old prosperity and what still remained was completely destroyed by Afghans who invaded Iran in the eighteenth century in the reign of Shah Hussain. Its inhabitants were put to death or made slaves.

¹ Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

² *Ibid.*

Ali Yar Khan Mazinuni, one of the rebellious Governors in the reign of Feth Ali Shah, rebuilt the walls and fortifications and induced people to come and build themselves houses therein.

The circumference of the town is about two and a quarter miles, and it has four gates—the Darwazeh-i-Iraq, Darwazeh-i-Ark, Darwazeh-i-Nishapur, and the Darwazeh-i-Tabriz. The citadel to the north of the town and the town wall are in a dilapidated condition. Inside the walls are two Madrassehs, public baths, seven caravanserais, and numerous mosques, including two big ones—the Jama and the Pa-i-Minar, the former with twin minarets.

Sabzewar is the centre of cotton cultivation, and a considerable cotton trade goes on. Wool and cotton are exported to Russia by Armenian merchants, while sugar and chintz are imported from Russia via Asterabad. Coarse cotton cloth is manufactured, and copper pots are also made.

Outside the city walls, towards the north on the main road to Teheran, is the new Civil Hospital with a delightful garden, well worth a visit.

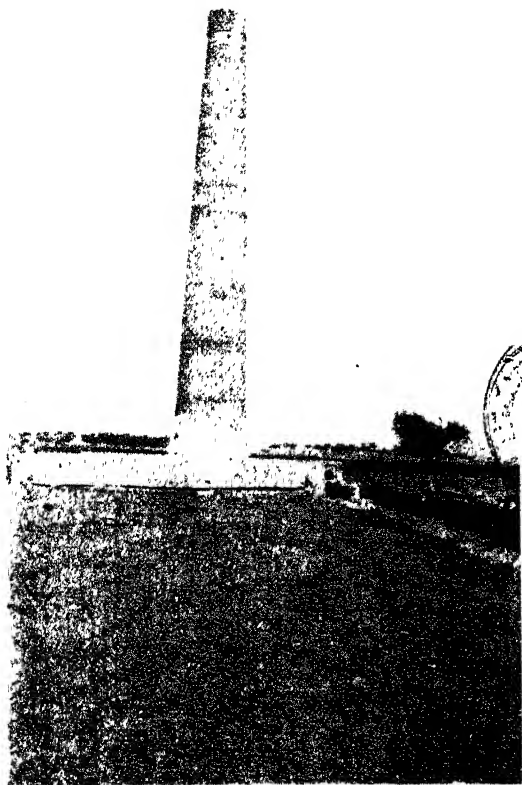
The population of Sabzewar is about 12,000 and the town is supposed to be the stronghold of the Babis in North Iran.

Outside Sabzewar, about four miles to the west and about half a mile to the right of the main road to Teheran, in a field is an isolated tower, called the minaret of Khoshrugird¹ (Khoshrugird was in the old district of Beihak, identical with the modern Sabzewar.) It was within the limits of the ancient city destroyed by Mohammed Shah of Khavarezm. The tower is about a hundred feet high, and springs from a square plinth of mixed concrete and gravel, the whole of which stands on a further terrace about eight feet high in the corners of which are doors, and which is surrounded by low pillars and low mud walls encircling the whole enclosure. Inside the minaret is a spiral stairway leading to the top, but it is now in ruins. The tower is made of brickwork forming a pattern on the surface, and converging towards the summit. The capital on the top is broken. The tower is also adorned with two bands of Cufic inscriptions, also in brickwork.

The inscription states that it was raised in the year A.H. 505 (A.D. 1110), when Sultan Sanjar reigned in Khorassan, in the reign of Sultan Mohammed the son of Malik Shah, the Seljuk.

It was badly damaged in the Afghan invasion of 1722, but was subsequently restored by Nadir Shah.

¹ See illustration on next page.



MINARET OF KHOSRUGIRD.



ICE HOUSE, MAZINAN.

CHAPTER VII

FROM MESHED TO TEHERAN—*Continued.*

From Sabzewar to Shahrud

AFTER leaving Sabzewar, the road goes through a gravelly plain with cotton cultivation all round. At thirty-five miles, the picturesque village of Mihr is passed. The post-house is in the centre of the village, and the streets are shaded by plane trees. Down the main street runs a rapid stream of delicious water. The caravanserai is about a mile from the village. Elevation 3,330 feet.

From now onwards there is a steady descent. Soon after leaving Mihr, the road bifurcates, but both roads lead to Mazinan, the lower and left road being the better of the two. Twenty miles from Mihr is Mazinan, a town in a sad state of decay, presenting a typical picture of gloom and decay and death, and happiness overcast,

“And tenanted only
By memories of the past.”

Originally the centre of a lot of fortified villages and towns, and a place of considerable size, it was destroyed by Abbas Mirza in 1831, in punishment of a rebel chief Ali Yar Khan. The son of Ali Yar Khan was held as hostage by Feth Ali Shah, as a pledge for his father's fidelity. When the army of the King was led against him, the Khan came out with presents to the King's tent, but when he returned to the fort, fired several cannon-shots into the royal camp. The King gave orders for the death of his son, and further directed his body to be cut into pieces, and thrown into the fort. The Khan immediately submitted upon terms. There is a tragic sequel to the above story. It is said that in the King's household there was a farrash who came from the same village as Ali Yar Khan, and was employed in the tent of Abdul Husain Khan, the King's Nazir. When he heard that Ali Yar Khan was in rebellion, he struck work and said, “The Khan is Yaghi (Rebellious) I will be so too,” and refused to return to his work even though he was severely beaten. At length he became senseless and died of the blows he received, yet in his lucid moments he continued to repeat, “The Khan is Yaghi, I will be so too.”¹ The new village is enclosed by a wall with twenty towers and was only recently built. It has a post-house, a telegraph station, a mosque and a college. Outside for miles are abandoned houses and ruined caravanserais. Between the old and new Mazinan is a magnificent caravanserai built by Shah Abbas II in A.H. 1074, and opposite to it are the ruins of a very ancient building, called the caravanserai Mamoun, supposed to have been built by the Caliph Mamoun, the son of Haroun-Al-Raschid. Its bricks measured thirty by twenty-seven by eight centimetres. Towards the west is a big cemetery and a guide pointed out one tomb as the tomb of Caliph Mamoun but needless to say it was not. There are also ruins of two old Imamzadehs. One of these Imamzadehs, in tolerable repair, is said to contain the bones of Sayed Ismail, considered by a certain sect (the followers of Hassan Sabah) as the last legitimate Imam and founder of that sect of Mahomedans.

From now onwards to Shahrud, about a hundred miles, the road was known as the “Stages of Terror.” It pursues a winding course through the

¹ Frazer, “Journey into Khorassan.”

folds of the Khorassan mountains which here abut on to the plain. Turkoman bandits used to dash down with sudden rapidity on the hapless traveller, seize what they could get, carry off animals and men and gallop back to their mountain fastness with as much precipitation as that with which they had come. To combat this scourge, the poor farmers erected circular towers all over the place, into which on sight of the enemy, they crept through a hole at the bottom, and placed stones against the aperture, and patiently waited till the raid was over. Inside they were safe, while if they were caught outside, they were either put to death, or carried away to the slave markets of Khiva and Bokhara. A story is related of an Iranian General in command of six thousand men, who halted behind his column to have a final whiff at his khalian, when he was snatched up and carried away in front of his troops, and within a few weeks' time was sold in the bazaar of Khiva for a few pounds. The victorious campaign of the Russian General Skobeloff in 1881, and the annexation of Akkhal Tekka have put an end to these raids, and the road is now absolutely safe. The circular towers too have disappeared, and a few blockhouses manned by troops have taken their place.

From Mazinan the road turns north towards the hills. Sixteen miles from it is passed the deserted caravanserai and fort of Sadrabad, which were built by the Minister Sadr Azem. Two miles further on, is the Pul-i-Abreshum or the Bridge of Silk. Some say it was originally called the Pul-i-Ab-i-Raushan, or "The Bridge of Clear Water," which has been corrupted into Pul-i-Abreshum. It is a bridge over the Ab-i-Shur, a salt stream, and the river marks the eastern boundary of Khorassan. It has three arches, two of thirteen and a quarter feet span, and one of sixteen and a half feet, and was built in 1874. The ruins of the old Shah Abbas Bridge, also with three arches, one big and two small, are a little lower down, and not far away. The stream is also known as the Kal-i-Mura.

Crossing the bridge, and proceeding onwards, a patch of green in an otherwise barren waste is encountered, with a little stream flowing through it. This is known as the Chasmeh-i-Gaz (or Spring of Tamarisks). During the days of the raid this was a dangerous spot, for here the Turkoman raider came to water his horse, and here the traveller was often swooped down upon and carried away.

Twenty-seven miles from Mazinan, and eight miles to the west of the Pul-i-Abreshum is the picturesque village of Abbasabad. The road passes two miles away to the left, and the village is seen in the distance.

Abbasabad, elevation 2,772 feet, is situated on the south side of a range of mountains and stands in tiers on a ridge of slate overlooking the desert to the south. The original fort of Abbasabad lies to the north of the present village and is in ruins. The caravanserai has two gates, and thirty-six rooms with doors, and fourteen rooms open to the front. The water-supply is plentiful.

Its origin was peculiar. Upon the high road connecting two capitals, there existed a big, barren space, rendered impassable to travellers by the Turkoman raids, and communication was continually interrupted. To obviate this difficulty Shah Abbas I transported a hundred Georgian families from their native land, and brought them to live on the barren salt marshes of Khorassan. It was a link in the chain of military colonies along the frontier. The severest penalties were inflicted on them if they attempted to desert the place. Shah Abbas, however, provided for their safety and for their maintenance, and made their situation as comfortable as he possibly

could. They were given annually a hundred tomans in cash, and a hundred kharwars of wheat, but this allowance was stopped in the reign of Feth Ali Shah. From the third generation onwards they were forbidden to use the Georgian tongue and many of them became Mussalmans.

The sufferings of the Georgian colony since their transportation have been very severe: the greater part lost their lives or liberties some time or other by the incursions of the Turkomans, and there was not one in the town in those days who had not been taken prisoner two, three or more times, and either escaped, or been ransomed back. One had seen his brother killed, the father of another had gone out to get some grain and never been heard of since. The Turkomans were continually about their village.

The doors of the caravanserai were three times burnt during the raids. In the nineteenth century, one particular attack is worth mentioning. A party of four hundred men made an attempt to surprise the fort. They alighted at nightfall in the ruined village, where two hundred remained, and the others got undiscovered into the caravanserai, and secreted themselves, intending to wait there till morning, when the villagers would come out, the idea being to catch hold of them, rush into the fort and seize that as well. There was a signal by which the other two hundred were to come to their assistance. The plot was discovered by accident: one of the villagers who chanced to go down to the caravanserai happened to see a Turkoman with his drawn sword gleaming from a recess. He challenged the man and receiving no reply, fired his rifle and alarmed the fort: the garrison turned out with what arms they possessed, and fired upon the Turkomans who fled for their lives, leaving a few killed in the place.

Since the Russian campaign of 1881 there has been absolute peace. Abbasabad with its tiers and its numerous windows and ruined battlements is a pretty sight, but the outlook from the town itself is a dreary one. A big kavir or salt desert stretches for miles to the south and south-east; and to the west and north are bare rocky cliffs.

Eight miles on the road beyond Abbasabad, after crossing low barren ridges and up a gravelly bed, is the village of Dehaneh-el-Haq. Four miles further is a caravanserai of Shah Abbas, all in ruins, near which there is a fountain of sweet water where the Imam Reza on his journey to Meshed performed a miracle of raising to life a dead man.

A valuable copper mine is seen in the distance, which was worked about two hundred years ago, even in the time of Nadir Shah, but was abandoned on account of the troubles after his death, and the dread of Turkoman raids.

After an ascent of 1,000 feet, and twenty-one miles from Abbasabad, is the big caravanserai of Miandasht, with lofty walls and projecting towers. There is an old caravanserai here built by Shah Abbas I, whose name appears above the gateway. It was repaired in A.H. 1291 (A.D. 1896) by Haji Ali Naki.

The new caravanserai was built by Hussain Khan Nizam-ud-Dowleh at a cost of £40,000. There are eighty-six rooms with doors, twenty-seven rooms open to the front and immense stables. Water is supplied from two large abambers or subterranean water-reservoirs to which access is gained by a flight of steps. There is one abambar outside the caravanserai. The water is brackish.

The village of Miandasht is small and contains a post-house and Iranian telegraph station. It is no longer walled. Miandasht was originally the central point of the "Stages of Terror."

From Miandasht onwards is what was formerly the most perilous part of the journey. The road winds in and out of low passes with knolls on either side. Ambuscades here used to be frequent, and a chance of escape impossible. The pass is known as the Dehaneh-i-Zaider, where the Turkomans descended to make their attack. At its mouth is the old dismantled fort of Zaider, where used to be a garrison of fifty riflemen. There are two or three watch-towers in the neighbourhood manned by troops. Beyond the dismantled fort, on emerging from the hills, is the village of Zaider, known as Kaleh-i-Zaider, built by Haji Mirza Akasi, Prime Minister of Mohammed Shah, who garrisoned it with about fifty riflemen to guard the road against Turkomans. Zaider gets its water from two watercourses to the north-west which form a swamp. In the distance is seen the twin-peaked mountain above Meiomai, and skirting its northern base the village of Meiomai is reached.

Meiomai—Elevation 3,068 feet, and situated twenty-three miles to the west of Miandasht

This is a pretty village picturesquely situated at the foot of the twin mountains which form a landmark. The peak is 6,000 feet above sea-level. The village is surrounded by a wall and contains some really old chenar trees. The water-supply comes from a stream between the twin mountains in the south through the Kalachian valley and is known as the Ab-i-Meiomai. On the western of the two hills are the ruins of a fort with four towers, some graves and a cistern.

The village has two mosques, and a fine caravanserai of Shah Abbas II built in 1655, now in ruins, but still used by caravans. It was in this caravanserai that Dr. John Cormick, for many years Chief Physician to Abbas Mirza, died of typhus fever in 1833. The village has a post-house, and it was in the bala khaneh of that post-house that O'Donovan was besieged by an infuriated band of Arab Hajis, and had a narrow escape: here too Lord Curzon stayed while doing a tour of Iran.

At the present day, Meiomai is the half-way halting place for aeroplanes flying between Meshed and Teheran.

There is a very nice eating house here, and in the season cooked partridges are given to travellers. Strange to say, there is no garage, but the people are friendly, and if there is a bala khaneh (upper storey of a house) being built or vacant at the time they clear everything out for the traveller.

From Meiomai onwards the road is stony, and runs along the base of the mountain range. The village of Rahmatabad is seen in the distance, and to the south lies the village of Armian, a picturesque village famous for its vines, people coming from afar during the season to buy grapes. There is a spring with an abundant water-supply flowing down the road, and fertilising a series of well kept terrace plots below the village. There are enormous chenar trees which are said to grow over the grave of the prophet Jeremiah (Armia), and over those of two other prophets.

A steady descent next takes place, the road winds across the plain of Shahrud, and 1,000 feet below Armian, and forty miles from Meiomai, is the town of Shahrud, at the foot of the Shah Kuh, the highest mountain range of the Elburz between Shah Rud and Asterabad.

Shahrud—Elevation 4,319 feet, 258 miles west of Meshed.

Shahrud is the capital of the district of Bostan Shahrud. It is a walled town with an ill-constructed citadel, built by Mohd. Saleh Khan in the reign of

Feth Ali Shah. It has five gates, the Darwazeh-i-Khorassan, Darwazeh Haji Mulla Mohd. Ali, Darwazeh Haji Miya Quarban Ali, Darwazeh Haji Sadaki, and the Samt-i-Mazar. Inside the city there are three caravanserais and three Madrassehs, and about six hammams, and three mosques, including the new Masjid-i-Jama. The old Masjid-i-Jama is outside the town.

Water is abundant, and the plain very fertile. Fruit is grown, principally grapes and melon. The water-supply is from subterranean watercourses. The Rud-i-Shah rises in the main range 20 miles north-west of Shahrud and, flowing past Bastam, runs down the street outside the city walls of Shahrud, and after watering it and the neighbouring districts, loses itself in a kavir in the south. The climate of Shahrud is very healthy, and the cold here is said to be severer than in any other part of North Iran.

Shahrud, situated at the junction of the caravan roads from Tabbas and Turshiz, from Asterabad, Yezd, Mazanderan and Teheran, was necessarily a place of great importance. There is export of cotton, unwrought and in thread, to Mazanderan, and also traffic in rice, and every kind of merchandise. It was most celebrated, however, for its local manufacture of boots and shoes, not only for the elegance of its workmanship, but for the quality of its leather. The boots and shoes used to be patronised by the Shah and the Royal Family. Nowadays the leather is distinctly of an inferior type.

The hills round Shahrud consist of red and white sandstone, and also limestone, while a salt desert runs along the south side of the road to Teheran.

If the traveller has time, he is strongly advised to visit the neighbouring towns of Bostam and Jajrun. Shahrud is also forty-three miles south-south-east of Asterabad, and a good motor road goes from Bostam to Asterabad. Petrol for cars can be obtained at Shahrud, and visitors can stay in garages.

CHAPTER VIII

EXCURSIONS FROM SHAHRUD TO BOSTAM, ASTERABAD AND JAJRUN

FIVE miles north-east of Shahrud, situated on a level plain enclosed by distant mountains, and watered by a small stream and numerous kanats is the town of Bostam in the district of Shahrud Bostam, and a great place of pilgrimage for Mahomedans. The road traverses a level plain. The town is walled, and a circle of gardens, and groves of willow trees give cover right up to the wall. In the centre of the town is the ark or citadal, with mud walls and a ditch. Bostam is renowned for its good water, and excellent horses. It stands at an altitude of 4,630 feet.

The principal sights of Bostam, supposed to have been founded by Bostam Meerza, are the tombs of the saints, the mosques built by Sultan Mohammed Khudabandeh, and the shaking minaret.

Two mosques were built in the reign of Sultan Mohammed Khudabandeh, the brother of King Gazan, the fourth in descent from Chengiz Khan. They were built in the year A.H. 699, and the other in A.H. 700. The dome of one is cracked, but has been cracked from time immemorial, and the interior is richly decorated with plasters and sentences from the Koran. The doors are finely carved. On the gate of this mosque there are inscriptions which declare the mosque to have been built by Sanghor Beg Abdul Roomee, by order of Sikander Sani, Shahi Iran wa Turan, Mohammed Khudabandeh.

Annexed to the mosque is the shaking minaret of Bayezid. If anyone standing on the balcony at the top shakes it, the minaret will immediately oscillate. An explanation is given about this. The minaret, like the mosque, being made of brickwork, but very slender, and having a slight inclination to one side, when it receives at its upper extremity the additional weight of a man, will vibrate if he puts himself into violent motion.¹ The minaret is between forty and fifty feet in height, and is ornamented with brick filigree work like those at Demghan and Semnan. The tomb of Shaikh Bayezid is near to its base.

Not far from this mosque is the mausoleum of Bostam Meerza, a square building with a top that was once covered with green tiles. It is said that in the vault below where the bones of the Mirza repose, there is a body which has been longer intact than any other known to science; its flesh, etc., has kept perfectly entire and undecomposed, although quite dried up.

Close to the mosque there is another mausoleum over the remains of Kasim, the son of Imam Jaffer Sadik. It resembles that of Bostam Meerza in form and outward appearance. The interior is carpeted and well kept, and the tomb is covered with a frame of wool cloth with silver balls at the corner. The silver candlesticks and plate, the property of the shrine, were taken away by plunderers long ago.

The memories of Imamzadeh Kasim and the Saint Bayezid are held in great reverence, and are places of pilgrimage for Mahomedans. The story of these two saints is as follows:—They were travelling together and at night-fall stopped at a place half-way between Shahrud and Bostam. While taking their evening meal, Kasim observed an ant on the table, and remarked to Bayezid that the ant must have been brought against his will from the

¹ Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

last stage. To bring it here was cruel, and he beseeched his friend to take the ant back to the place from where it had been brought. Bayezid took the insect back, and while he was away, the inhabitants of Shahrud and Bostam saw a great light proceeding from the person of the Imamzadeh as a sign of Heaven's approbation of the sentiments he felt towards the insect. The men of both places were attracted to the spot, fought for the person of the Imamzadeh, and seven Shahrudees were killed. The people of Bostam, shocked at the slaughter and wishing to put an end to it, beat out the saint's brains with a spade. The Shahrudees buried their villagers on the spot where they fell, marked by a small hillock called "Haft-tan" (Seven Bodies). The Bostamees carried the dead body of the Imamzadeh to their town and buried him there.

Meanwhile Bayezid having returned, learnt what had happened and reproached the Bostamees violently for their crime. The latter were annoyed and told him if he did not shut up, he would share the same fate. Bayezid refused to be silent, and said that now that his friend was murdered, he had no wish to survive him. The enraged Bostamees fell on him, stoned him to death, and buried him under the very stones with which they had beaten out his brains. The mound of stones is just outside the tomb of the Imamzadeh Kasim.

Bayezid was a derwish or philosopher who had a numerous attendance of disciples, and many miracles are attributed to him. He wielded great influence over the Turkomans. It is said that in fits of intoxication, he used to speak of himself as the Divinity. When his disciples told him about it, he was so shocked that he desired them to punish him or even kill him in case of recurrence. When next he became intoxicated and spoke of himself as the Almighty, his disciples stabbed their master in various parts of the body with their knives, till he fell down senseless. But when he recovered, it was found that the wound which each of his disciples had inflicted was transferred to his own body from that of the saint. He died about A.D. 874.¹

All these buildings are in a ruined square. Close by are the ruins of a Madrasseh built by Shah Rukh, son of Timur.

The other mosque is a plain brick building in a better state of preservation. The tiles of the dome have all fallen off, but the walls are cut into a succession of salient and re-entering angles, and the whole appearance is remarkable. An inscription states that it was built in A.H. 700 (A.D. 1306), by Mohammed Ibn Hussein, Ibn Aby Talit Al Mohindis, by order of Sultan Gazan Khan who died in A.H. 703 (A.D. 1309) and was succeeded by his brother known as Sultan Mohammed Khudabanda.

From Bostam to Asterabad is a good run and a steady descent, and I will take the opportunity to describe the place now. From Asterabad one can either return to Bostam and Shahrud, or proceed straight to Teheran via Aliabad and Ferozekuh, on a very good newly made motor road.

II. Asterabad²—Elevation 377 feet

History

The city was founded by Yezid Ibn Makhut, an Arab, and the General of the armies of the Omeiyah Khalif, Suleiman about A.D. 720. It was destroyed by Timur in A.D. 1384. In January 1744, one of the Kajar Chiefs

¹ Story taken from Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

² The name has now been changed to "Gorgan."

whose stronghold it was rebelled against Nadir Shah. The latter took summary vengeance, and ordered the Kajar stronghold of Koleh Khundan in the city to be razed to the ground. During the rise of the Kajar dynasty under Agha Mohammed Shah, Asterabad came into prominence. Later on, it was an armed outpost against Turkoman raiders.

Asterabad is known as the Dar-ul-Muminin or the House of the Faithful on account of the numerous Sayyeds who inhabit it. It is situated on the north-western slope of the Elburz, and on the river Aster. It originally was surrounded by a mud wall flanked by round towers, and having five gates—The Shahrud Gate; the Gate of the Chihil Dukhtaran or Forty Virgins (so called from a raid made by Turkomans in which forty virgins were captured) to the south; to the west, the Mazanderan Gate; to the north, the Sabz Meshed and the Dankiwan Gates. The walls and the gates are absolutely in ruins. An interesting feature of the town described by Eastwick was the prison, a place about ten feet square in which Turkomans when captured were kept before execution. At the time of his visit, there were forty-one human heads stuffed with straw in a corner of this prison.

The old causeway of Shah Abbas emerged from the western gate. From here it passed the various palaces and cities built by Shah Abbas, and went right through the forest to a place called Kiskar in the western part of Gilan. It was made of roughly hewn blocks of stone about a foot square. Its width at Asterabad was about fifteen feet, but passing through the jungle, it dwindled down to about ten feet. On the southern side, the causeway led to the foot of the pass leading to Shahrud. This too is also in ruins.

In modern Asterabad, there are no buildings of any interest. The streets are paved, the houses, like those in Resht, are red-tiled or thatched, the roofs having wide projecting eaves, the tiles being laid on reeds supported on rafters, the walls being of stone or brick. Many have verandahs, and some of the houses are built on platforms raised by poles to a height of two or three feet from the ground.

The citadel built by Agha Mohammed Shah in 1791 is now in ruins. Outside the walls to the north is the tomb of Abdulla, a brother of the Imam Reza.

The climate of Asterabad is damp and unhealthy but very pleasant in the winter. There are any amount of rice-fields, which form the staple food of the people. The fishery is entirely in the hands of the Russians. Soap boiling is one of the local industries.

III. *Jajrun*

The third excursion from Shahrud can be made to Jajrun, where there is a tower known as the Goombaz-i-Kaus. It is a circular, hollow tower about a hundred and fifty feet high, and with walls ten feet thick. The diameter diminishes towards the top. The external walls are divided into ten salient and re-entering angles, like the mosque at Bostan, and the tower at Rhey. The top of the tower has a pointed cone of baked bricks which contains a window. The tower has been built of baked bricks, large and square, about two and a half inches thick. The whole is cemented with lime. Part of the tower is damaged.

The tradition of the dilapidation is as follows:—A certain King while marching with his army in the plains was asked by his officers where he would like to halt for the night. Seeing this tower from a distance, the

King said that he would encamp at the foot of the tower and not nearer. The journey proved far longer than was expected on account of the deceptive distance, and the King in anger swore that the tower should never be the means of deceiving travellers again; he ordered his men to pull it down and destroy it. By the time the tower was undermined, and the existing damage done, the troops had encamped all round it, and the engineers went to ask the King in which place he wanted the tower to fall. It was found that on account of the proximity of the troops, the tower could not be made to fall without killing a number of men, so the King decided that the tower be allowed to remain standing for the sake of his army.¹

As the same type of tower is to be seen at Rhey, it is not worth while going to Jajrun.

¹ Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

CHAPTER IX

FROM MESHED TO TEHERAN—*Continued*

Shahrud to Teheran

THE road on the whole is very good. The village of Deh Mullah is passed and the journey to Demghan is very monotonous. On the right is the Elburz range, pink in colour, on the left a kavir with hills about ten miles away. After passing the small village of Mehmandost, the minarets of Demghan are visible from a distance, and forty-one miles west of Shahrud, at an elevation of 3,767 feet, is the town of Demghan, supposed to be the site of the Hecatomphylos (the City of a Hundred Gates) of the Greeks, and the old capital of the Parthian Empire, though now there is not a single monument to identify it with the City of a Hundred Gates. The foundation of Demghan is ascribed to Hoshang, second King of the Peshdadian dynasty.

The history of Demghan is gruesome and bloody, and it must have witnessed many a strange sight. It was destroyed by Changiz Khan and Timur Lang. In 1404, Don Ruiy de Clavijo, on a mission from the Castilian King to the court of the great Tartar, passed through Demghan, and saw standing two towers of human heads set in mud, which but a few years before, the latter had erected as a trophy. Shah Abbas constructed the citadel and rebuilt the town. In 1729, Nadir Shah gained his famous victory here over the Afghans, who were expelled the following year. In 1763, Zeki Khan, the savage half-brother of Kerim Khan Zend, who was despatched to quell a revolt of the Kajar tribes, planted a garden and in it put his prisoners' heads downwards at even distance. Here in 1796 died the blind Shah Rukh, the grandson of Nadir Shah, after the inhuman tortures inflicted on him by the brutal eunuch Agha Mohammed Shah at Meshed.¹ Molten lead was poured on his head till he confessed the whereabouts of a ruby coveted by Agha Mohammed Shah. In 1832, the armies of Abbas Mirza, on their way to Herat, encamped here for three months, committing terrific damage. On the 7th August 1911, the royalist troops of the ex-Shah Muhammed Ali under Sirdar Arshad defeated the Government troops at this place, and many of the latter then joined the royalists.

The two outstanding features of Demghan are the citadel which stands on a prominent site, and the minarets.

The citadel rises above the bazaars on the west side and is in ruins. In one of the rooms here, known as the Maulud Khaneh, Feth Ali Shah was born, but nobody could point out the room to me. One can walk round part of the walls of the citadel, and a good view of Demghan and the plain below can be obtained from there. The citadel was also lent to travellers as a resting place.

South of the citadel and outside its walls is the tomb of Shah Rukh, open to visitors. Close to it is the mosque of the Imamzadeh. Pir-i-Alamdar adorned it with two inscriptions in Cufic. It was finished in A.H. 417.

The minarets of Demghan are to the north-west part of the city and stand some way apart. They belong to the Imamzadehs Jaafar and Kasim. That of the Imamzadeh Jafaar is close to the north-western gate of the city, and the saint is buried under a wooden sarcophagus ornamented

with richly covered arabesques, but there is no date. To the right of the entrance is a tablet fixed in the wall, on which is engraved a *firman* of Shah Rukh, son of Tamerlane in A.H. 825. This *firman* proclaims a reduction from seven per cent. to five per cent. of the duty hitherto levied on the soap manufactures in the town and district of Demghan. Both these Imam-zadehs have minarets faced with bricks so as to form geometrical designs on the circumference, and a band of Cufic letters in high relief. The minarets resemble those of Sabzewar.

In a vegetable garden near the mosque is a small tower, and the inscription on it states that it was finished in the year A.H. 446.

The population of Demghan is 15,000 and the streets are planted on each side with trees, and water from the Chasmeh-i-Ali runs through the town. There are large areas of cultivated ground, and many gardens which now occupy the places where houses formerly stood. The place is famous for its pistachios. Demghan is infested with white ants.

In the hills opposite Demghan are two springs of great interest. One is known as the Chasmeh-i-Bad (Spring of the Wind) which if stirred at certain times is said to produce a hurricane which blows everything to destruction.

The other and more interesting of the two is the Chasmeh-i-Ali. Here there is a mark on a rock said to be the impression of the hoof of Ali's charger. It is said that Ali's charger stamped so fiercely with his hoof as to leave a permanent indentation in the rock. The footprint is protected by a wooden railing. Large numbers of pilgrims come yearly to pay their respects to it.

One mile short of the village of Astaneh, a stream flows from the spring, watering the cultivation along the road. The water is perfectly pure, and in great volume. It is credited with healing properties, and is said to be efficacious in all skin diseases. A large tank is filled from the spring and contains a number of fish said to be sacred. By the side of the tank is a small building where travellers can halt. The majority of the pilgrims feed the fishes, while some prefer to bathe in the stream.

About eleven miles west of Demghan, and four miles north-west of Raziabad, on an isolated circular rock, and very difficult of access, are the ruins of Gird Kuh, the famous stronghold of the "Assassins" which resisted the attacks of the Mongols for fifteen years. Alamut, the original stronghold founded by Hassanes Sabah, was taken by Hulagu Khan in 1256, but Girdkuh held out till the 15th September 1270, when it was given up to Hulagu's successor, Abaka Khan. The ground all round the mountain is barren and stony, but a little stream called the Chasmeh-i-Faikhar passes close by.

After leaving Demghan the road strikes due west, and twelve miles from Demghan is the fort of Daulatabad, enclosed by three walls and surrounded by a deep fosse. It is now abandoned. Its chief who had held out for some time against the provincial Governor, offered Abbas Mirza a bribe of about 30,000 tomans if he would keep him in the Government. The prince pocketed the money, and carried him off to Meshed. The local Governor took advantage of his absence to capture the fort.

The road now goes through a richly cultivated plain. The miserable village of Ghushah is reached, consisting of a caravanserai and a post-house. A desolate and uncultivated plain is next passed, the road makes an ascent through a mountain pass and drops down a hollow, where is situated the

caravanserais and post-house of Ahuan (forty-five miles from Demghan), at an altitude of 6,275 feet. The mountains round it are barren, and the country deserted and sterile. It was here that the Imam Reza performed another of his miracles. On the way to Tus, he found a captive female antelope, which on recognising him, was able to speak, and invoked his assistance on behalf of her young. The Imam ordered the hunter to release the animal, and himself went bail for her reappearance. The antelope, however, failed to keep her appointment, and the Imam on being appealed to by the hunter, willed her to reappear, and handed her over to her captor with whom she remained a prisoner ever afterwards.

In Ahuan are two caravanserais. The one on the left of the road, built of stone and in ruins, is the caravanserai of Noshirwan the Just (A.D. 530-578). It has walls nine feet thick, and eighty yards long each way, and flanked by fine round towers on each side.

The other caravanserai, a few yards further on, and to the right of the motor road, was built by Shah Suleiman of the Sefavi dynasty.

Beyond Ahuan, the road enters a mountain range, the range that divides the plain of Demghan from that of Semnan. The city of Semnan is visible from a distance of twelve to fourteen miles, from the highest point of the range, a patch of green in a desert waste.

Semnan is at an elevation of 3,738 feet, seventy-one miles from Demghan, and four hours' motor run from Shahrud. It was remarkable once for its manufacture of tea cakes, and blue cotton pyjamas, for the beauty of its women, and the unintelligibility of its speech. When Vambéry who had heard about the famous tea cakes in Herat, asked for them when he came to Semnan, he was told that so great was the demand for these articles, and so enormous their export that there were none left for local consumption. Lord Curzon could not find any pretty women. As regards the speech, it is related that a savant who was once employed by an Iranian monarch to report on the languages spoken by his subjects illustrated that of Semnan, by shaking some stones in an empty gourd before the King. The beauty of Semnan now lies in its well irrigated and extensive gardens, and its ancient trees. Every house has its own garden, the water-supply is plentiful, and comes from four large open reservoirs outside the town near the Nasar Gate. Near the reservoirs are six caravanserais, one of which, that built by Shah Abbas, is of brick. Near the Nasar Gate, outside the town is the tomb of Imamzadeh Ali ibn-i-Jafar. Close to the same gate is the ark or citadel, the residence of the Governor and the Iranian Telegraph Office.

Towards the west, opening out on the main Teheran road is a gateway of tiles in geometrical patterns, and above the archway is a picture of Rustam on his horse killing a white Div.¹ Rustam is represented with a bigger beard than Feth Ali Shah.

At the western entrance of the Mahallat quarter are the tombs of the Imamzadeh Alavi and Imamzadeh Ashraf, both with domes. A little further on is the tomb of Sayed Mirza Hassan, and a curious round tower called the Burj-i-Chihil Dukhtar, where according to legend, forty virgins, who are all buried there, once lived a holy life.

In the north-eastern part of the town are three ruined mounds, about forty feet high, known as the Burj-i-Mirza Askari. The largest of them is known as the Kaleh-i-Turkoman, and has in it a well sixty feet deep. Close to them stands the ruins called Chihilban, a tomb of forty derwishes.

¹ Demon.

The two principal mosques inside the city are the Masjid-i-Jama and the mosque of Feth Ali Shah, and access is gained to them through the bazaars. The tower attached to the Masjid-i-Jama is a hundred feet high, and contains a hundred steps leading to the summit, where there is a prayer gallery. The mosque was built in the thirteenth century, and so many times repaired that its old foundations are difficult to trace. The last who had it repaired was Mohammad Shah.

The mosque of Feth Ali Shah is a few hundred yards away on the other side of the bazaars. It has a spacious quadrangle fifty yards square, and two aivans (or recessed arches) set in blue and yellow tiled enamelled frames. Attached to it is a Madrasseh. The dome at present is being covered with blue enamelled tiles.

Enclosed inside the bazaar on the way to the Masjid-i-Jama is an old chenar, which protrudes through the roof. In an open space outside the bazaars are some more old chenars. The bazaars are spacious and clean, and covered. There are thirteen public baths in the city. Tobacco is grown. The present population of Semnan is about 25,000 inhabitants. The town was plundered in 1911 by the ex-Shah's troops after they had defeated the Government troops at Demghan.

Just outside Semnan the road bifurcates, and the visitor has the option of taking any road he likes as both lead to Teheran. The road on the right is an extremely good motor road but with steep gradients and goes via Firozekuh; the road on the left, the lower road and the old road, is very bad indeed, but goes via the Caspian Gates, and is by far the more interesting of the two, and will be described here.

About ten miles out of Semnan on the lower road is the little village of Surkhi, plentifully supplied with water, where there is an excellent garage for motors, and where the visitor can spend a most comfortable night. Food is supplied from the kava khaneh next door.

Twenty-two miles from Semnan (126½ miles from Shahrud) is the town of Lasgird. Elevation 3,914 feet. The "man-roost" described by Lord Curzon is now no more, the Kaleh¹ having been abandoned in 1901. A new city has sprung up and the old citadel is neglected and in ruins. The new town has a mosque and a caravanserai with twenty-four rooms and a large hall below, and some rooms in an upper storey. There are three reservoirs for water. The gardens are extensive and famous for their almonds, pistachios and pomegranates. The Imamzadehs Riza and Ali Akbar are buried here.

For the benefit of the reader I shall give Lord Curzon's description of the "man-roost," as the old citadel is close to the roadside :—

"Here there has been a citadel built upon a lofty circular mound to a total height of eighty feet from the plain. The citadel has fallen into ruin, and the buildings in its interior are a litter of rubbish and bricks. But the villagers have established themselves in the deserted enceinte, and on the very top of the outer walls have built a double-storey of mud houses, which are only accessible by flights of crazy steps from the interior, and the most remarkable feature of which is a ledge or balcony built out from each storey with rude logs of wood plastered over with mud. Upon this rickety platform, which has nothing in the shape of a railing to prevent anyone from falling off, and which is full of holes, the inhabitants appear to live their outdoor life. The place from a little distance looks as if a gigantic colony of birds had

¹ The citadel.

settled there and built out their nests from the walls, the outer shape of the entire mound resembling a huge cast. It is entered by a steep stairway from the ground, mounting to a small postern, the door of which is a single block of stone swung on a pivot. I entered and scrambled up the rude flights of steps in the interior, and poked my nose into some of the nests—I cannot call them cottages—in the upper storeys. The women were unveiled and steeped in squalor. The general condition of the tenements was very much like what the domestic economy of a rookery might be expected to be. Here the same dialect is spoken as at Semnan. The citadel is surrounded by a deep broad fosse, converted into garden plots, the revenues of which go to swell the endowment of the Imam Reza at Meshed.¹

Between Lasgird and Deh Nimak the road runs over a bed of deep soil, which has been furrowed by winter torrents into deep gullies and narrow ravines. There are hills on the right. A ruined tower on one of these hills is pointed out as the Gumbaz-i-Duzd (or the Dome of the Thief) and was supposed to be the resort of a noted band of plunderers, who had infested the road.

Close to a deep and narrow chasm is another ruin known as the Shatir's tomb. The tradition is as follows:—

On one of the journeys made by Shah Abbas the Great into Khorassan, he was delayed here by the want of a bridge. The King, struck with the narrowness of the chasm, desired one of his shatirs² to leap across it. The man obeyed, and to the surprise of the monarch was successful. The King commanded him to leap back again, which also he did successfully. The King said to himself, "That fellow must be rich. I am sure he must have gold about him. He leaps so well." (Alluding to a saying that one who has made his riches in service, renders his possessor more active and willing than he who has saved nothing.) "Let us," added he, "see what he has got." He commanded the shatir to be stripped, and gold and jewels, presents from the King, were found on his body. These were confiscated and the King said, "Now try the leap again." This time the poor fellow failed, and tumbling down into the chasm was killed. The King ordered a bridge to be built on the place with the shatir's money, and a tower erected to his memory. Very little remains of the tower now.³

Lying in the middle of a barren salt desert, at an altitude of 2,750 feet, eighty-eight miles east of Teheran, is the village of Deh Nimak, where excellent melons are grown. Here there is a good caravanserai with twenty-four rooms built by Shah Ismail in the seventeenth century. There is a ruined fort. The water is brackish. Five miles to the north-east of the town is a salt quarry.

Padeh is next passed at a distance of twelve miles. It has a much ruined fort, but unlike Lasgird, it was not inhabited. The fort is however well worth a visit. It is well on the way to turning into a tumulus.

Three miles further on is the village of Aradan, altitude 2,898 feet. The fort here is said to have been built by the Guebres, the contemptuous name applied by the Mahomedans to the Zoroastrians. It stands on a mound sixty feet high, and on the steepest side the parapet at the top is one hundred and thirty feet from the ground. The walls are immensely thick, and legend

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

² A "shatir" was a running footman attendant on a great man.

³ From Frazer, "Journey into Khorassan."

ascribes the construction of the fort to demons. At the time of my visit there was a house being built on the top of the citadel. There is a telegraph station here.

All the way from Demghan to Aradan can be seen tumuli at a distance from the road. They consist of immense circular mounds about eighty feet in height, with little or no traces of buildings, except traces of mud citadels, and composed of solid masses of clay. There has been considerable discussion about these mounds, but they are generally supposed to be the ruins of citadels, or places of defence for the villages below which have long since perished. Beyond Aradan, an abundant stream descends from the mountains and separates into many channels, and driving is by no means easy. Cultivation improves proportionately. This is the district of Khar, renowned as one of the granaries of North Iran. The village of Qishlaq (winter quarters), elevation 2,740 feet, is passed. There is abundant water, and extensive fields and gardens. Teheran is supplied with grain from this district.

The road turns north-west, and enters a range of hills at a distance of eight miles. This is the Sirdarra Pass, also known as the Pylæ Caspiæ or the Caspian Gates. The Pylæ Caspiæ was the pass through which Darius fled towards Bactria after his defeat at Arbela by Alexander, and through which he was pursued by the armies of Alexander. It was in the plain of Khar that he was overtaken by Bessus, the General of Alexander, and treacherously killed. I will not go into the pros and cons as to whether the Sirdarra Pass is the much discussed Pylæ Caspiæ or not. Information can be got principally from the pages of Arrian and Pliny. The latter says that the pass itself was eight miles in length, and that no fresh water is met with in a tract of twenty-eight miles: the former reports that Alexander reached it in one day's rapid march from Rhages (Rhey). The Sirdarra Pass was first suggested by Morier, and subsequently taken up by others. The great difficulty, however, is that the main range of the Elburz has still to be crossed before getting to the Caspian Sea and the pass does not justify the description of gates. Lord Curzon thinks that on the whole, the Sirdarra Pass corresponds with the Pylæ Caspiæ mentioned by Arrian, but not by Pliny.

The Sirdarra Pass is entered by a narrow passage or gateway to the south-east, and winds tortuously through a projecting spur of the Elburz range. It is six miles in length. A salt stream flows down the valley leaving a white crust at the sides. It opens out, but later again contracts. In the centre of the pass is an old deserted building with towers at the corner, and at its exit at the western end are the ruins of two old towers. The place had evidently been fortified and guarded. It is only forty miles from Rhey. It is by no means so narrow in parts, as only to admit a cart, as Pliny says.

Soon after emerging upon the plateau beyond the pass, can be seen the mountain of Demavend covered with snow, and nowhere in the world except in Japan is there a mountain so full of legend. It was here that Noah's Ark was supposed to have rested (according to the old Iranians); here was kindled the bonfire of Fredun when he conquered Zohak, the fifth king of the Peshdadian dynasty. Zohak himself is entombed here, and in chains, and the smoke from the mountain is supposed to be the breadth of his nostrils. King Minocheher, the grandson of Faridun, after his battle with the demons, was asked to shoot an arrow from Demavend, and he would be allowed to reign over a tract of land where the arrow reached. He discharged his arrow from Demavend, and it fell at Merv, and all that territory

was assigned to him. Here also is chained the Iranian Prometheus Yasid bin Jigad, whose liver is eternally devoured by a gigantic bird. Here also are supposed to be treasures jealously guarded by snakes. It is the highest mountain of the Elburz range, 18,500 feet, covered with eternal snow. The Elburz Mountains were known as the Haoro-Berezaiti in the *Avesta*. All the Divs, Drugas¹ and evil spirits were supposed to dwell in the north; the gate of hell is Mount Arezura in the Elburz range, and the province of Mazanderan was supposed to be the ordinary abode of the Divs. The Chinvad Bridge, the bridge which reaches over hell, was supposed to run from the Elburz to Mount Datiya. It was broad and easy for the soul of the righteous man, but for the soul of the sinner, it grew narrower and narrower, and he tottered and fell into the depths of the gulf where the darkness is so thick that it can be held in the hand. It was in the Elburz Mountains that Sam caused his son Zal to be exposed, where he was brought up by the Simurgh (Salno Meragho), a fabulous bird, a kind of eagle. The report of a young hero thus brought up reached the ears of Sam, who remembered that his son had been left there. He wished to see him and did it with the aid of the Simurgh, which gave him one of its feathers, telling him to throw it into the fire in case of danger, for it would come to its help. At the birth of Rustam, the great Iranian hero, Rudabeh the wife of Zal was in grave danger, and again one of the Simurgh's feathers was burnt, the bird appeared, and a safe delivery ensued; the third time the Simurgh helped Rustam was when he killed Aspandiyar, the son of Behman, but more about that later on.

The road now goes through the plain of Veramin, and crossing a bridge over the Zamrud River, the village of Aiwan-i-Kaif is passed. Elevation 3,504 feet. There are fruit gardens here famous for their figs and pomegranates. The soil is rich, well-watered and cultivated. The water is brackish. There are seven caravanserais, and a telegraph station here. Two miles to the south-west of the village is a mound, which is pointed out as the ruins of the city of Cambyzes. There are also the ruins of two forts, the larger of which had very thick walls. There are no villages round the place for miles.

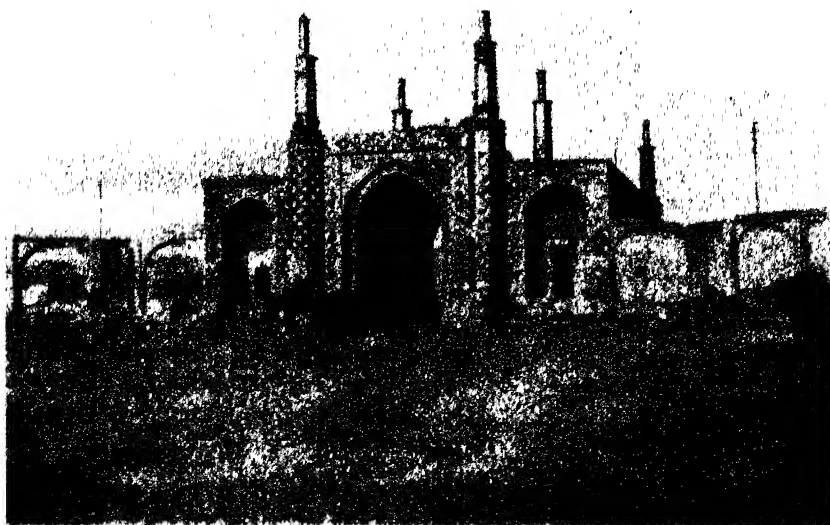
No further villages of importance are passed on the way, and the remaining journey of forty-one miles is very monotonous. The road eventually goes up a hill, and crossing over to the south-western side, Teheran is seen in the valley below, full of smoke. The view is not particularly impressive or pleasing.

¹ Evil spirits.



THE ELBURZ MOUNTAINS (HAORO-BEREZAITI OF THE "AVESTA").

By kind permission of the Iran



SHAMIRAN GATE.

CHAPTER X

TEHERAN

Teheran—Altitude 3,800 feet. Population 220,000

TEHERAN in the fifteenth century was supposed to be a big and unhealthy place without any walls, but well supplied with everything.

Shah Tahmasp, the second of the Sefavi dynasty, was the first to favour it, but Shah Abbas I, having been taken ill there from a surfeit of fruit, vowed he would never enter the place again. In his day, a Khan was appointed in charge of the place.

A place was built in Teheran by Shah Suleiman, and here Shah Sultan Husain received the Turkish Ambassador. It was pillaged in the Afghan invasion. Nadir Shah on his return from India convoked a meeting here of all the priests of religion with a view to starting a new national faith. Here he blinded his son Reza Kuli Khan, and here the latter was afterwards murdered. Ali Murad Khan while marching on Mazanderan stayed here.

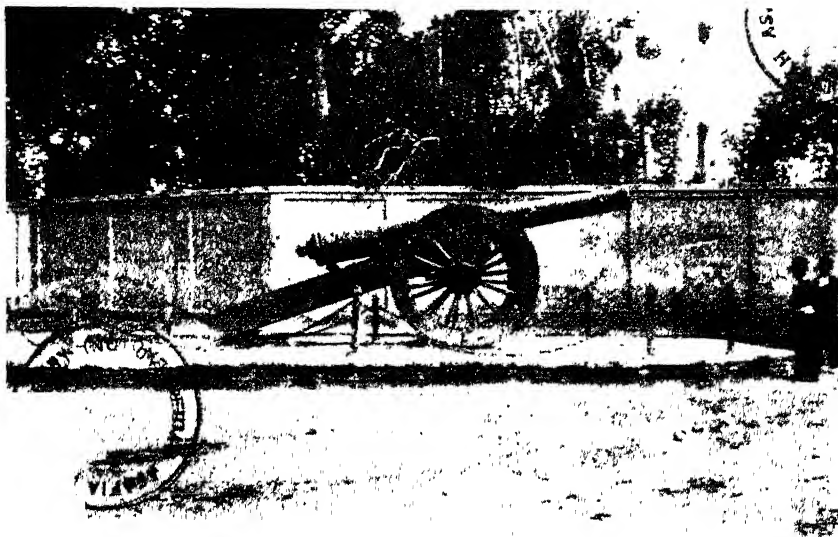
Teheran, however, came into prominence in the time of the Kajar dynasty. It was made the capital by Aga Mohammed Shah in 1788, so that from here he could keep a watch on Russia. Feth Ali Shah beautified and extended the place, but the man who took a real interest in it was Nasr-ed-din Shah, who had the old walls and towers pulled down, the ditch filled up, the city extended and a new wall constructed copied from the fortifications of Paris before the German War; the walls describe an octagonal figure with twelve gates. The gates consist of lofty archways adorned with pinnacles and towers, and modern glazed tiles in geometrical patterns and look very imposing from a distance, but on a near approach it is seen that many of the tiles have fallen off and never been replaced.

In 1906, a national assembly (Majlis) was convoked by Muzaffer-ud-din Shah. His son Muhammad Ali tried to abolish it, and bombarded and destroyed the building in which it assembled. In July 1909, the Nationalists entered Teheran, and the Shah took refuge in the Russian Legation. He was deposed, and a constitutional Government was established with Ahmed Mirza, the ex-Shah's son, as Shah under a Regency. It lasted till December 1911, when the Majlis was dissolved by the Regent. In July 1910, the principal Mujtahid was murdered in Teheran, and later on several counter-murders took place. The leaders of the Fidais were captured. In July 1911, Muhammad Ali entered Iran, and the Majlis voted 100,000 tomans for his capture dead or alive. In October 1911 the whole Cabinet except two resigned on account of a Russian ultimatum demanding the dismissal of Mr. Shuster, the Treasurer-General, and in December 1911, several partisans of Russia were murdered in Teheran.

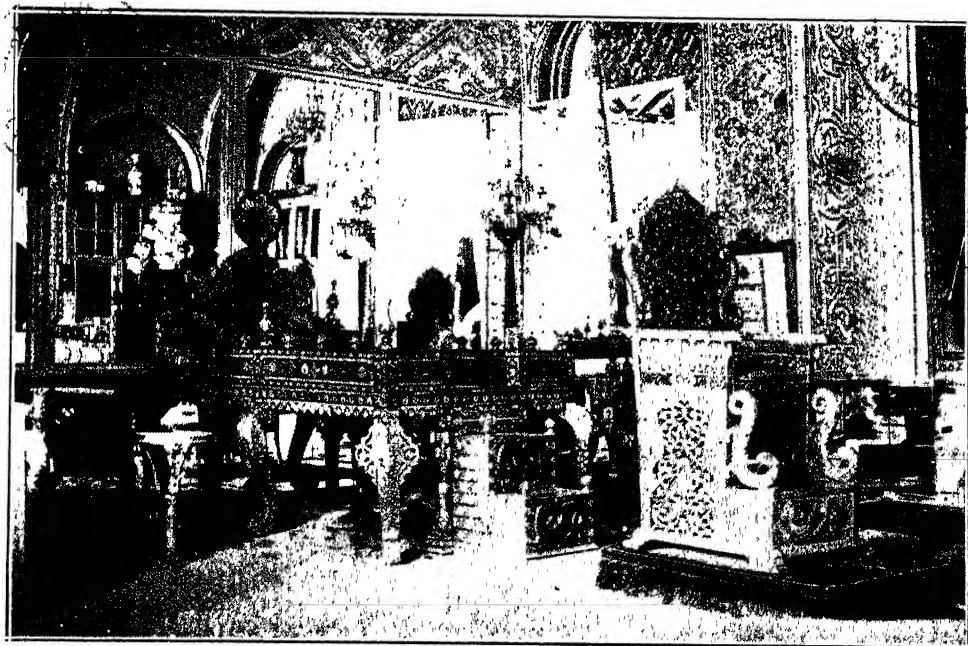
During the present regime of Reza Shah, Teheran has considerably improved, and will soon be one of the best cities in the East. The streets are being widened, new houses built, new public parks and gardens made, and electric light has taken the place of the old street lamps. There is a tram-line running right through the centre of the city, and taxis and motor cars have taken the place of the two-horsed broughams and victorias, though the latter still persist. The roads are metalled and watered. New European shops have sprung up, and a new house built for the Majlis.¹

1 The Iranian Parliament.

Note :—The walls of Teheran have now been destroyed.



THE TUP-I-MARWARID.



THE TAKHT-I-TAOS.

By kind permission of the Iran League.

Teheran is situated in a valley, and built on a salt moist soil. The climate is unhealthy, and the heat in the summer is excessive, but all those who can afford it go to Gulahek at the foot of the Elburz Mountains.

The most convenient place to start making atour of Teheran is from the Tup Maidan, in the northern part of the town. It is the principal square of Teheran. In former days, it used to be surrounded by the artillery barracks. The length of the maidan is about two hundred and seventy yards, and the width one hundred and twenty yards. On the eastern side of the maidan is a fine building occupied by the Imperial Bank of Iran. On the northern side of it is the new municipal building with a clock tower, the southern side consists of low houses one or two-storeyed. From the south-east corner, the road leads to the eastern entrance to the palace and to the bazaars. From the south-west corner a gate leads to the Khiahan-i-Almasieh, from which the western entrance to the palace is gained.

On the southern side of the Tup Maidan, nearly a quarter mile square, is a great quadrangle containing the citadel. In it are courts, gardens and buildings which belong to the Royal Palace. Just outside the gateway of the palaces on the western side, a brass cannon is pointed out as the Tup-i-Marwarid¹ or Cannon of Pearls, which was originally of a semi-sacred character and served as Bast or Sanctuary for criminals.

The Palace is entered on the eastern side by a small and unpretentious gateway and guarded by sentries. The gateway leads into a long irregular courtyard planted with trees. On either side is a paved causeway where there are flower-beds, and rows of trees. The upper end of the court is a big handsome building in the centre of which is the white marble throne standing upon a dais. The room is set with mirror panels, and the walls are embellished with mirror work, small facets fixed in plaster, so as to produce a number of angles and coruscations. There are also oil-paintings of the princes of the Kajar family. The white marble throne was made by the orders of Kerim Khan Zend, wrought of the marble of Yezd, and brought from Shiraz. The structure rests upon low twisted pillars, and upon the shoulders of grotesque figures. Two steps, supported by lions, lead up to it, and the throne itself consists of a twofold terrace upon the back part of which sits the Shah of Iran. The roof of the front part of the throne is sustained by two immense columns with deep spiral flutings also of Yezd marble, and constructed by the order of Kerim Khan for his place at Shiraz. A passage from the Talar leads into another court, where is the State entrance of the palace. It was under a threshold opening out of the arcade between the two that the bones of Nadir Shah and Kerim Khan Zend were deposited by the orders of Agha Mohd. Shah, that he might have the exquisite pleasure as he went in and out, of trampling upon the remains of his hereditary foes. A large doorway and carpeted steps lead to the State apartments. The Shah's library is at the top of the staircase, and is reported to contain manuscripts of inestimable value. At the top is the entrance to the museum, a great hall which contains the royal regalia, and most valuable curios. In the room are a number of deep recesses terminating in windows along one side, while the centre is a long parallelogram; the partitions between the recesses are fitted with glass cases, and contain crockery, and the royal regalia, etc. In the recesses are a number of immense porcelain vases, beautiful Sevres, Dresden and Worcester vases presented by the crowned heads of Europe, and one vase presented by King George V to the present Shah on his coronation. Here also are the two malachite tables presented by the Czar to Nasr-ed-din Shah. Armchairs covered with a plating of real gold are also seen.

¹ See illustration on previous page.

Behind the glass panels are seen dinner and dessert services of Sevres porcelain of various colours and all hand-painted; side by side with it is old Iranian porcelain, and the officer who took me round said with pride, "*In mal-i-qadeem-i-Irani ast*" ("This is old Iranian work"), and then with a look of contempt at the Sevres, said "*In mal-i-feringhi ast*" ("This is the work of the feringhee").

Inside the glass cases are also the swords of Timur, Shah Ismail and Agha Mohammed Shah, and the enamelled arms of the Sefavi kings, and a coat of mail worn by Shah Abbas. A square glass case at the far end contains the crown of Agha Mohammed Shah and a pearl bedecked crown of Feth Ali Shah, with an aigrette of diamonds. There, too, is also a tiara of Nasr-ed-din Shah manufactured in Paris.

Far more interesting than any of these are ancient theodolites, and astronomical instruments, and one terrestrial globe of jewels which was constructed by Nasr-ed-din Shah out of his loose jewels, at a cost of £320,000 exclusive of jewels placed in by himself. With the jewels the value is supposed to be about £947,000. The sea is composed of emeralds, England and France of diamonds, Iran of turquoises, its own national stone, India of amethysts, and Africa of rubies. The diamond that marks Teheran was found upon the body of Ashraf, the last Afghan King, by a Baluch who presented it to Shah Tahmasp II. Demavend is marked by a ruby, which was torn from Shah Rukh by Agha Mohammed Shah.

From the walls depend a number of oil-paintings of the different Shahs of Iran.

At the upper end of the parallelogram are two Thrones. One is of modern shape, enamelled and completely covered with rubies and emeralds.

Behind this throne is the replica of the Peacock Throne said to have been brought by Nadir Shah from India in 1739-40. The fabric is overlaid with a plating of gold, enamelled and encrusted with precious stones, chiefly rubies and emeralds. The platform is on seven legs, and has two steps decorated with salamanders. A balustrade containing inscriptions runs round, and on the back is fixed a circular star of diamonds. On either side of the star are two bejewelled birds, perched on the edges of the back frame, and facing each other. There is no canopy and no peacock, and although called the *Takht-i-Taos*,¹ it is not the original Peacock Throne brought by Nadir Shah. Malcolm says that Nadir Shah was so fond of the real Peacock Throne of the Great Moghul that he had an exact duplicate made of it in other jewels. This throne was constructed by Mohammed Husain Khan, High Priest of Isfahan, when Feth Ali Shah married a young lady. Lord Curzon says² that the original Peacock Throne of Nadir Shah was discovered in a broken-down and piecemeal condition by Agha Mohd. Shah who extracted it with many other jewels by inhuman tortures from Nadir's grandson Shah Rukh at Meshed, and then had the portions made up in the modern shape and style, which is the other throne in the Museum.

Behind the Museum are a number of vaults. There is an Armoury containing arms, a gallery where there is a collection of paintings of the late artist Abdul Husain Khan Ghaffari. As the building was under repair, I could not see these apartments.

The Gulistan or Rose Garden is vast and surrounded by various buildings. It is divided by paved avenues and gravel paths into flower-beds and tanks. There are pines, poplars, planes and cypresses which line the alleys. The

¹ See illustration on page 53.

² Curzon, "Persia."

channels are lined with blue tiles down which there is a constant flow of water.

On the eastern side of the Gulistan is a towered pavilion known as the Shems-al-Imarat, or Sun of the Palace—a very conspicuous object especially from outside. It is built in the form of two towers, terminating in two kiosks. Between the two is a slender tower with a European clock. On the street side there is not a single window or brickwork to show what it is. On the garden side, there are a number of balconies and stained-glass windows, and a large Italian portico in the centre. It was being renovated when I was there, mirrors were being put up in the walls and ceilings. Here is the mechanical clock with moving figures and peacocks which was intended as a present from Queen Victoria to the Emperor of China, but later on was bestowed on Nasr-ed-din Shah. Here are also the Gobelin Tapestries that were given by Louis Philippe to Mohammed Shah.

At the western extremity of the Gulistan is the Takieh or Theatre built for the performance of the Tazieh or Passion Play, every year during the Muharram. It is round in shape, and in the centre is a circular stone platform mounted by steps. An open passage runs round succeeded by five tiers of stone seats. These are occupied by veiled women during the performance. Between these, there are numerous gateways leading to arched passages through which actors come in. On one side is a marble pulpit, where stands the Mullah, who directs the ceremonies. Above the stone tiers rise three storeys of boxes with brickwork and light arcades. From the upper part of the building are arched traverses. It was originally intended to cover the whole structure with a dome, as Nasr-ed-din Shah, it is said, was so enamoured of the Albert Hall in London, as to long for a reproduction in Iran; the superstructure was found to be inadequate to the burden, so spans were thrown across and awnings placed over them, when the play is acted in the day-time.

Bazaars

Proceeding south from the Shems-al-Imarat, and going through an open courtyard known as the Maiden-i-Sabz, one comes to the bazaars, which are vaulted throughout with brick domes and open frequently upon small courts. There are many caravanserais, and there are few articles that cannot be procured there, but from a curio-collecting point of view the bazaars are useless. The moment the people spot a foreigner, exorbitant prices are asked. Curiosities, carpets, old coins are sold by dealers in the Khiaban-i-Lalezar, even brocades, lapis lazuli and embroideries, and these are the dealers who bring them to the European quarters for sale. The foremost of these dealers are Jews, who are all out to make what they can get.

Returning now to the Tup Maidan, it is found that two streets run from there in a northerly direction. The easterly of the two streets is the Khiaban-i-Lalezar, one of the principal streets of Teheran. Here is situated the Post and Telegraph Office, and the Grand Hotel, whose charges are about five toman a day. The hotel is very comfortable, but lacks sanitation. Here too are the shops of the Jews, chief among whom is that of Solomon Chenassa, a man who sells antiques of all kinds, reflets metalliques, thirteenth century tiles, old embroideries, and old curios of the Sassanian and Parthian periods, and also of the Greek period. His prices, however, have to be carefully watched. Not far off from him is the shop of Elias, a carpet merchant, from whom valuable ancient carpets can be obtained, and at fairly moderate prices. Most of the shops are modelled on European lines, and many have show-windows. Gramophone records can be obtained here,

and also there are two shops which do Amara work (antimony engraved in silver, the same that is done in Amara and Baghdad). Cinemas too are seen in the Avenue Lalezar, and through the Avenue during the day runs a tramway, on a single line.

The more westerly of the two streets leading from the western side of the Tup Maidan is known as the Khiaban-i-Dowlet, sometimes described as the Boulevard des Abbassadeurs, from the fact that representatives of foreign Powers have residences here. At a distance of about half a mile from the Tup Maidan is the British Legation. A fine gateway leads into a large wooded enclosure, where there are a dense mass of trees, and winding pathways and runnels of water: the British Consulate is also within the grounds. The Legations of several other Powers are also near at hand. In the Khiaban-i-Dowlet is the Hotel de France which is decidedly better and cleaner than the Grand Hotel. The sanitation too is good.

In a westerly direction from the Tup Maidan runs a street. Going down the street about a quarter mile to the right is a pig park, the Bag-i-Mili, well laid out with trees and flowers. There is a bandstand in the middle. The only other building of interest in Teheran besides the mosques and Madrassahs is the Majlis, or the House of Parliament, but permission from the Minister has to be taken for entrance.

The mosques and Madrassahs of Teheran are few in number. The Masjid-i-Shah built by Feth Ali Shah; the finest building is the Musjid-i-Sipah Silar or Mosque of the Commander-in-Chief built by Nasr-ed-din Shah. It has four lofty and glittering minarets entirely covered with bright tiles, and terminating in florid capitals. A lofty archway leads into a quadrangle in whose centre is a large tank. Opposite the entrance is a small recess, opening into a large vaulted chamber with four rows of stone pillars, and a broad mehrab or prayer niche. On the right is the principal facade with the four minarets, and an immense dome over the prayer place. In a corner of the building is the library, and outside is a tank for purposes of ablution and drinking, with an iron railing and taps all round.

The building includes both a mosque and a Madrassah. It was commenced by Mirza Hussein Khan, the statesman who negotiated the Reuter Commission in 1872, and after being successfully Sadr Azam (Grand Vizier) and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Sipah Salar, died in exile as Governor-General in Meshed.

Other edifices of some importance are the Masjid-i-Madar-i-Shah or Mosque of the King's Mother and the Masjid-i-Khan-i-Mervi.

The Zoroastrians in Teheran are about nine hundred in number, and there is a school for their education.

In Teheran there is also a Zoroastrian Girls' School. At present, two hundred and fifty girls are in it, including Moslems of decent families, and even the daughters of Inayatullah Khan, the brother of Amanullah Khan, the ex-King of Afghanistan. Moslems prefer to send their children to Zoroastrian schools rather than to the Mission schools. A philanthropic lady has just given a subscription of a lakh of rupees for the enlargement of the school.

Outside Teheran are the various palaces and country seats of the different Shahs. The best known of these is the Negaristan (or Picture Gallery) built by Feth Ali Shah, and which used to be his favourite country

resort. It was described as a lovely retreat, with gardens, cascades and tanks interspersed with pavilions and kiosks. There were oil-paintings inside, the work of Mohammed Hassan Khan, one of the eminent artists of his day. In an upper chamber of the same pavilion, Mirza Abdul Kasim, the Grand Vizier of Mohammed Shah, was strangled in 1835 by the order of his royal master. It is strange that in the Kajar dynasty, three successive sovereigns, Feth Ali Shah, Mohammed Shah and Nasr-ed-din Shah put to death through jealousy their three ministers who had either raised them to the throne or were filling the highest office in the State at the time of their fall.

Inside the Negaristan was a pavilion used as the ladies' quarters. Here was a subterranean bathroom, in the centre of which was a circular pool, lined with blue tiles, whilst at the extremity of the chamber was an inclined plane of polished marble down which, it is said, the women used to slide into the arms of the Shah, who pitched them into the pool, some distance away. The Negaristan is in complete ruins now.

Leaving the walls of Teheran by the Shamiran Gate,¹ and about two miles to the north are the ruins of the Kasr-i-Kajar (or Castle of the Kajars). From a distance this building has a most imposing appearance. It rises in a number of white tiers, one above the other, culminating in a sort of castle at the top. The tiers consisted of earthen terraces faced with brick, and once adorned with lakes and fountains. The palace contained a variety of pictures of scenes and persons dating from the time of Feth Ali Shah and there was a portrait of Strachy, who accompanied Sir John Malcolm's mission, and created such an impression on Feth Ali Shah that he composed an ode in his honour, and had his picture painted for his palaces in Teheran and Isfahan. In the Kasr-i-Kajar his picture was placed between those of Zal and Afrasiab. When the King moved to Sultanieh in the summer with part of his harem, the rest of the ladies were left behind in the castle.

The other palaces of the Shah are situated at Shamiran, a cultivated belt along the base of the Elburz to the north of Teheran. A good motor road lined with trees runs through, and on the way is the garden of Mohammed Hassan Mirza with a big lake in front of a house, and a fountain lined with blue tiles. The garden is well worth a visit. It shows a typical Iranian garden.

Another good road leads to Gulahek on the north, where the summer quarters of the British Legation are situated, while a third road goes to the north-east towards another villa known as Doshan Tepe. The palace or shooting box is situated upon a rock, and was a favourite place of the Shah when he went out shooting in the neighbourhood. Near Doshan Tepe are two other shooting boxes, Kasr Firuz to the south and Surkheh Hissar to the north.

¹ See illustration on page 51.

CHAPTER XI

EXCURSIONS FROM TEHERAN

I. *To Rhey and Shah Abdul Azim*

THE mosque of Shah Abdul Azim is six miles south south-east of Teheran on the Qum road, and attracts annually about 300,000 people. It was regarded as a sacred spot, before the Mahomedan conquest, as the sepulchre of a lady of great sanctity. After the Mahomedan conquest here, was buried Imamzadeh Hamzeh, the son of the seventh Imam, Musa-el-Kasim. Here also in A.D. 861 was buried a holy personage named Abdul Kasim Abdul Azim who lived in concealment at Rhey for a long time. Here too is interred Nasr-ed-din Shah who was murdered by a fanatic in 1896, Jairan Khanum, the favourite wife of Nasr-ed-din Shah, is also buried here. There is a Russian Government Telegraph Office here.

Sovereigns have enlarged and beautified the shrine and built thereon a golden-plated dome and now a big village has sprung up in the neighbourhood. A portal of a crowded bazaar leads to the main gateway of the mosque. There is a chain stretched across the entrance. A narrow-gauge railway line leads from near the southern gate of Teheran to the shrine, and it is crowded on Fridays, especially with women.

The road to Rhey or Rhages branches off to the left across the railway line about a hundred yards before getting to the shrine. Rhey is supposed to be the Rhages of the Parthian and Achæmenian days, though Rawlinson seems to think that the ruins at Veramin represent ancient Rhages. The Avesta twice mentions Ragha in connection with Zoroaster's name, and so do the Pehlavi texts; tradition makes Rhey the home of his mother, and some people definitely assert that Zoroaster himself was born here, and not in Urumich. Its foundation is ascribed to Hoshang, the second King of the Peshdadian dynasty somewhere about the fourth millennium B.C.

In the seventh century, Rhages was a flourishing city according to the Bible, and the books of Tobit and Judith mention it as the contemporary of Nineveh and Babylon, containing over a million souls. In the Apocrypha, Tobias set forth from Nineveh for Rhages guarded by the angel Raphael in disguise to recover the ten talents deposited with Gabael by his father. Here too Nebuchadnezzar smote Arphaxad in the mountains.

In the Achæmenian days, Rhages is mentioned in the Behistan inscription as the place where the troops of Darius Hystaspes captured the rebel Medes Phraortes. Here also came Alexander in pursuit of Darius (Codomanus on the eleventh day of his march from Ecbatana (Hamadan).

The city is said to have been rebuilt by Seleucus Nicator, and a century later, was made the capital by Arsaces, the founder of the Parthian Empire, about 250 B.C.

During the Arab conquest and later on, Rhey was called the "First of Cities," the "Spouse of the World," the "Market of the Universe." It was the birthplace and the favourite residence of Haroun-al-Rashid; in A.D. 1027, it was captured by Mahmud of Ghazni from the Buyah dynasty. Later on, it became one of the two great cities of the Seljuk sovereigns, and the residence and sepulchre of Toghrul Beg, and one of the capitals of Alp Arslan. The Roman Emperor Romanus Diogenes, before he would consent to have any dealing with Alp Arslan, demanded the surrender of Rhey. Eventually, the Emperor was captured in a campaign.

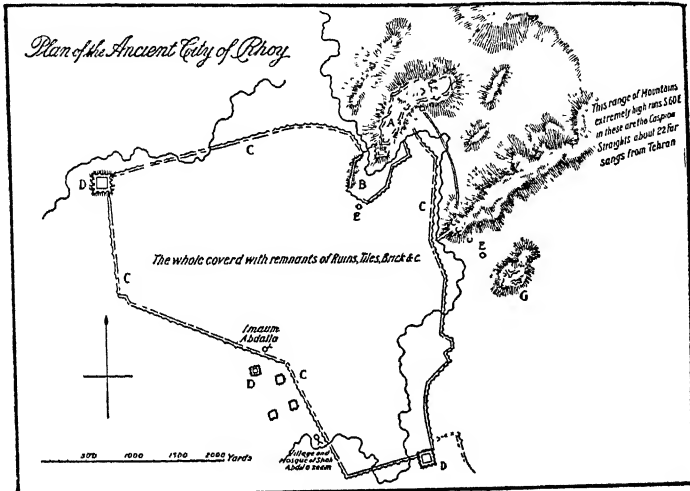
In 1221, the troops of Chengiz Khan took the city by storm, and "70,000 respectable persons" were slain. Timur finished the work of destruction, and Clavijo, the Spanish Ambassador to the court of Timur, in 1404,

described it as a "great city all in ruins." Under Timur's son, Shah Rukh, the city revived again; and his grandson Khalil Sultan, who bartered an Empire for the love of Shad-el-Mulk (Delight of the Kingdom), lived and died here. From the death of Shah Rukh, the decline of Rhey is to be traced, and now it is in a sorrowful state of decay, the sport of fortune-hunters who dig there for coins, and tiles and pottery.

The best description of Rhey is given by Ker Porter in his travels, and I cannot do better than copy it out:—

"The ruins lie about five miles south-east of Teheran, extending from the foot of the curving mountains, and running in that direction across the plain is an oblique line south-west. The surface of the ground, all over this tract, is marked by hollows, mounds, mouldering towers, tombs and wells. The fabric of all being chiefly of that burnt and sun-dried material which seems to bid defiance to the last oblivious touch of time. A very strong citadel appears to have occupied a high and rocky promontory that juts out considerably beyond the other huge buttresses of nature which here start from the different clefts in the mountains. Along the perpendicular sides of the height we easily discovered the foundations of its embattled works. And directly from its base a line of massy fortification appeared reaching southwards and apparently defending the eastern surface of the city till it terminated in an immense square bulwark, flanked with towers and making a fortress in itself. Thence the wall curved round in an irregular oblique sweep towards the north-west till it met another enormous square flanked in the like manner with six round ones. This tower terminated not only that line of wall, but another, which had also started from the base of the promontory and formed the northern front of the city; the whole fortified place between the three walls taking the shape of a triangle, its vertex (A) touching the citadel promontory, its base (DD) stretching south-west from the one large, square tower to the other. These walls are still many feet in height, of prodigious thickness, and have been additionally strengthened by proportionately sized towers connecting the wall, and placed at point-blank arrow distance from each other. The two enormous fortress-line towers before mentioned (DD), which terminate the south-eastern and north-western points of the triangle are united with the walls; but in going along the outer side of the longest line which stretches from the one square tower to the other, we find a third tower about the middle of the wall, but standing out at some distance from it. It is nearly of the same dimensions with the others and supported in the same way with round flanking towers. Probably a ditch and a bridge lay between this great bulwark and the principal gate of the town, this entrance lying in almost a direct line with the citadel. The remains of the fortification are near it as if still more to protect this ingress which opens to the south-western side of the plain. I have no doubt that these three square towers (DDD) commanded the three great entrances to the city, the northern holding the communication with Azerbaijan and Mazanderan, the southern that toward Khorassan, and the south-western pointing to Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana. Therefore, by this last gate, it is probable that Tobit's celestial messenger entered on his embassy to Gabael. At the foot of the great promontory (A) which crowns the apex of the fortifications, and projecting within their area, is another range of equally strong walls, embracing a considerable space and forming a lower citadel (B), within which, in all likelihood, were the royal palace and other buildings of state. Another wall, exterior to the city rampart, connects the height on which the first great citadel stands with another rocky projection of the mountain, where every tenable spot

has been strongly guarded by outworks, linking themselves across the gorge of a deep ravine to the side of a third citadel or fortress, finely built by stone, and on the summit of an immense rock which commands the open country to the south."



KER PORTER'S PLAN OF REI

The outlines of the acropolis can still be determined. The walls in some cases are fifty feet high, and some of the sun-dried bricks measure seventeen by seven inches along the face. Round about the walls and within the area that formed the city can be found fragments of pottery and earthenware. On digging deeper, reflects metalliques and tile-work, etc., can be obtained. Any amount of coins too can be found.

The most conspicuous object among the ruins is the Tower of Yezid, situated nearly midway between the citadel and the central point in a garden with tanks and trees. It is very much like the towers seen in Bostam and Jajrun. From sixty to seventy feet in height, and one hundred and twenty feet in exterior circumference, entirely hollow inside, and roofless, the outer surface is broken into a series of projecting angles. It is composed of brick. Mahomedans have identified it as the sepulchre of Toghrul Beg, who died in A.D. 1063; while some writers suppose it to be the burial-place of Khalil Sultan, the grandson of Timur, and his beloved wife Shad-ul-Mulk, in the fifteenth century.

The entrance to the tower is through a high arched doorway, surrounded by a square portal. The old Cufic inscription has completely disappeared.

At Rhey there used to be a semi-obliterated bas-relief of a Sassanian King. It was a figure mounted on horseback and armed with a spear, charging at full speed against an antagonist the head of whose horse was roughly indicated in outline on the stone. It is difficult to say which particular Sassanian monarch it was, for Feth Ali Shah committed a palimpsest, having chiselled away the old carving to make way for one of his own. The sculpture now shows Feth Ali Shah on horseback spearing a lion, and has no historic value. The sculpture is carved on a rock to the east of the ancient citadel.

A few hundred yards from the round tower is a little pool of clear water known as the Chasmeh-i-Ali. Chiselled on a panel on the face of the volcanic work overhanging this holy spring is a high relief, divided into

three sections separated by columns. In the centre is Feth Ali Shah with his long moustache and beard, seated on a throne. He wears a high cap with three aigrettes, and in his belt are a sword and dagger, and he holds a baton in his hand. There are nine figures to his right in two rows :—The Naib Sultaneh, Husein Ali Mirza, Taghi Mirza above ; below Mohammed Ali Mirza, Fateh Ali Mirza, Abdulla Mirza, Bachme Mirza, and one figure not identified. To the Shah's left, in the lower row, are the figures of Ali Naghi Mirza, and Veri Mirza, Malik Mirza the last figure to the left, Haidar Mirza and Mohiullah Mirza next to Feth Ali Shah. All the figures are long-bearded, and garbed in long gowns, and wear swords and daggers. Under the seat are little figures of Muchul Mirza and Kameran Mirza. On Feth Ali Shah's right hand there is a hawk, and behind his throne stands an attendant with a sunshade.

A glorious view is obtained from the top of the citadel at Rhey. To the south and south-west is the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim with its golden dome glittering in the sun, while nearer is the railway line, at one time the only railway in Iran ; to the south-east are numerous mounds and elevations which are supposed to be old signal towers for pilgrims going to Kerbela. To the east-south-east is an elevated fortress, while to the north-east on a hill is the Parsi Tower of Silence, and to the east is another whitish grave that is known as the Tomb of Sherbanoo, the daughter of the last Iranian King, Yezdezird III, who married Hussain the son of Ali. To the north is the lofty mountain of Demavend covered with snow, while to the north-west can be seen the city of Teheran, with its minarets and domes.

The excursion to Rhey and Shah Abdul Azim can be done very comfortably in four hours. The railway that leads to the shrine was started by a Belgian Company in 1886, and the trains started to run two years later in 1888. There was tremendous opposition, and fanatics used to tear up the line, and pilgrims would not travel by it as anticipated, and the expenses exceeded its profits. One day, a pious pilgrim, who had come from the holy shrine of Kerbela, was run over and killed by the train. The railway was mobbed, and the carriages and engines smashed. Riots took place in Teheran, and though further rolling stock was produced, no one would travel by them, and the company went bankrupt. Later on, the concern was bought up cheap by a Russian Company, and is now running, and very popular, especially on a Friday, when it is crowded with women.

II. *To Veramin and Back*

About thirty-five miles in a south-south-easterly direction from Teheran are the ruins of Veramin. Rawlinson thinks that Veramin is the site of the ancient Rhages. A good motor road leads up to the ruins, and to the town of the same name. It goes past Rhey, leaving it on the left. The present town is dominated by a mud fort, sloping inwards from the base. The fort is being excavated, glazed pottery and numerous Parthian coins of the period of Mithridates have been found here.

In the fields close by is a tower of the same type as seen in Rhey, but this tower is covered, and has a conical top.

There are also the ruins of a fine mosque attributed to Sultan Ibn Said, the son of Sultan Mohammed Khudabanda, whose tomb is at Sultanieh. The village consists of two hundred and fifty houses with numerous gardens.

III. *To Demavend*

The third excursion is to Demavend and will take nearly three days to go there and return. A motor road goes part of the way, and then horses.

have to be procured. Demavend, the highest peak of the Elburz Mountains and 18,500 feet high, is a volcano in a state of suspended animation. Columns of smoke are seen to ascend from the fissures, particularly from the Dud-i-Kuh or Smoky Peak, on the southern side. Heavy sulphur fumes are emitted from the mountain. The crater is filled with snow and ice. The first man to ascend it was Mr. (afterwards Sir) W. T. Thompson in 1836. The French naturalist Eloy met Thompson coming down from the top and himself ascended a few days later. The climb is neither difficult nor dangerous from a mountaineering point of view. It is rather fatiguing, and climbers sometimes get overpowered with the sulphur fumes emitted from the fissures. From its summit a horizon of 50,000 square miles is seen in clear weather.

Mount Demavend has many legends, and it has the ceaseless task of crushing the monster Zohak, the Azi Dahaka of the Avesta, the fifth King of the Peshdadian dynasty, from whose shoulders two serpents grew who had to be fed every day with the brains of two human beings. He is chained under its ponderous bulk. "Only in the eleventh millennium will the mountain be relieved from duty, for then the hero Sam Kerhasp will waken from his sleep, slay Zohak, and usher in the dawn of a new era."¹

The little village of Demavend is fifteen miles from the mountain, but situated on an excellent motor road. The road leaves Teheran by the Mazanderan Gate, and branches off to the left before going to Firozkuh.

The village is situated amongst trees and cornfields, in a hollow on the banks of a river, its cornfields being levelled like terraces. The vale is watered by two streams, the one flowing from the north which is the principal river, and the other, a small rivulet flowing from the north-west. Both meet at Demavend, and flow through the town. On the borders of these streams are willows, poplars and walnut trees. The town is thickly shaded by them, and consequently keeps cool even in the hottest part of the day. The town is spread over a hill, the principal street running at the foot of it near the river.

A festival peculiar to Demavend takes place every year. Its ceremonies are meant to commemorate the chaining of Zohak, and consist of a general rejoicing in which all the inhabitants of the town and villages join, collecting horses and other beasts in the fields, and riding about at full gallop with loud shouts. At night they light fires on the tops of their houses, and illuminate the town.

The tradition is that Zohak had two serpents growing out of his shoulders, which it was necessary to feed daily with human brains; that two men of Demavend were every morning killed for this purpose; that at length a youth resolved to rid his country of such a scourge, went to slay him, and informed his townsmen, that if he should succeed, he would light a beacon on the top of the neighbouring mountain, as a signal of his triumph. Zohak was living near the mountain of Demavend. Thither the youth Faridun went and slew him; and the illuminations are intended to commemorate the promised fire which he lighted.

The Iranian historian Mirkhond gives another version of this festival. It is called the *Id Kurdi* or Kurds' Holiday, probably commemorating the emancipation of the people who had fled to the mountains to escape the sacrifice to the tyrant, and from whom, it is said, the Kurdish people sprang.

The village of Demavend is supposed to be one of the oldest in Iran, founded by Siamek, and the seat of the Government of Zohak. The approaches to it were by two passes, one to the west, which was broad, and another to the south, which was narrow. These, it is asserted, were closed by thick walls and gates, of which no trace exists now.

¹ Jackson, "Persia, Past and Present."

CHAPTER XII

FROM TEHERAN TO MAZANDERAN

Via Firozkuh

LEAVING Teheran by the Mazanderan Gate, the road runs nearly fifteen miles through dreary mountains which are situated to the east of Teheran, known as the Hazaar Jarib, and presents nothing but a succession of ascents and descents. After about thirteen miles, there is a long steady descent into the glen, wherein is situated the village of Jajrud, with a decent caravanserai and a newly-made kava khaneh (coffee-house) with accommodation for travellers. The river at Jajrud is called by La Rochette, the ancient Epardus. It is a rapid stream, and at the time of melting of the snows, carries everything before it. The river takes its source from the mountains, and flows in an undefined bed until it reaches the plain of Veramin, where it loses itself among cultivation.

Crossing the river by a new bridge, the road enters upon mountains of arid appearance, till the village of Boumahin, twenty-six miles east of Teheran, is reached. The village owes its existence to a stream which irrigates the small territory attached, and flows south into the plain of Veramin. The spring is never dry, and there is a good strip of cultivation. In the same direction as Boumahin are several other villages, the largest of which is close to what was once a royal summer house, called the Bagh-i-Zamerood or the "Emerald Garden."

The road still continues its dreary course to Firozkuh. The village of Aminabad is passed, with just a few houses on the banks of the Dalichai, and six miles further on, Bagh-i-Shah a fine village, the surrounding country being very fertile, producing wheat, barley, maize, pulses, castor-seed and cotton.

After Bagh-i-Shah, a good motor road branches off to the village of Demavend, and just before commencing the ascent of Firozkuh, the Khorassan road or the "high road to ancient Parthia" leading to Semnan branches off on the right, while the Mazanderan road continues straight on. The ascent of Firozkuh is commenced, the gradients are very steep, and there are many hairpin bends, and from the top of the mountain, Mount Demavend is clearly visible. It is bitterly cold on top, but after the descent, the climate for the rest of the journey gets warmer and warmer.

At the foot of the mountain on the other side and ninety miles east of Teheran is the village of Firozkuh, a large village, situated on the acclivity of a high limestone rock and on the south side of the plateau of the same name. A stream, the Sarvasheh, which rises about twenty miles to the eastward near Gur Safid, runs between the village and the mountain. After passing through a rocky gorge shut in by two opposing cliffs of limestone, it irrigates the greater part of the adjacent territory which is sown for the most part with wheat and barley. The village is very picturesque and surrounded by trees. Food can be obtained here, and lodging and accommodation as well, but the place is dirty. Its inhabitants say that its site is ancient, but of positive antiquity there is nothing to see. Some years ago there was a windmill and bath on a steep rock on the eastern cliff which were said to be as old as Alexander the Great. A neighbouring hill is pierced with small caverns where some of the inhabitants live, and which are also used for their cattle in the winter, and which help to keep them warm from the great

cold and snow that are felt here. There is an Iranian Government Telegraph Office here. There is also a very poor bazaar. The village has five hundred houses, but famine caused many to be emptied.

The mountains to the north-north-east and north-west of the valley of Firozkuh have a particularly hard appearance, and are composed of bare rock. Through these mountains on a north-east bearing, are two passes which are great natural curiosities. To see them one ought to go on horseback. Riding for eight miles in the plain, and leaving a small village behind, the foot of the mountains is reached, but the aperture cannot be seen. On a closer approach, a dark and narrow passage is seen, about six to ten feet high, wide, three hundred feet long, and extending from the foot to the summit of the mountain. A stream runs through it, and the mountains rise on either side to a height of two hundred and fifty feet.

Leaving this, and going for about a mile through a small open valley, through which this stream runs, another pass is encountered more extraordinary than the first. Water oozes from its highest summit, whilst on both sides are large excavations and grottoes. After ascending a steep declivity, with the stream roaring in cataracts through a very contracted bed, another gorge is seen more open than the others, where flocks of goats jump with ease over most awful precipices. The whole of these passes and valleys are called Sawachi.¹

At about six miles from Firozkuh, the Mazanderan road leads over the mountains to the left, and a caravan road to Khorassan to the right. Nearly at their separation is a stupendous pass formed by perpendicular cliffs, about two hundred feet high, and a narrow channel at their base about thirty feet in breadth through which runs a stream. On the easternmost side are the remains of a castle known as the Caleh Surkh or the Red Castle, from its being situated on a red hill. The castle dates back to the time of Timur or a century earlier. Having passed the pass, the road to Semnan strikes due east. This road is not in use now.

Leaving the village of Firozkuh behind, the road becomes very picturesque; waterfalls are encountered, and mountains and valleys covered with verdure, and huge trees and forests, entirely different to the rest of Iran. The road winds along the banks of a river, and goes through forests. The road first makes an ascent of 6,620 feet, and from there onwards is a steady descent. The village of Surkhabad is passed, a small village, with a dilapidated caravanserai. Close to it, however, is the castle of Div-i-Safid (or the White Demon), which is situated immediately above a narrow gorge defended by a stone wall. Those who have read the Shah Nameh will remember the fight of Rustam, the Iranian hero, with the Div-i-Safid.

After going through a mountain pass, the village of Zirab is passed. The houses now become thatched with branches, leaves and rice straw, and are by no means watertight. Some of the rooms are built of logs cemented with mud. The village is situated on the river Talar which often inundates it, hence the name Zirab (under water). The valley is cultivated with rice.

On the right bank of the Talar River is the village of Shirgah, situated in the midst of a most beautiful forest, with rice cultivation in the neighbourhood.

Aliabad, the next village, is twenty-six miles south of Barfrush, the capital of Mazanderan. It is said to contain four hundred houses, but there are only a few stalls forming a bazaar and some miserable huts. Shah Abbas the

¹ Morier, "Journey Through Persia."

Great built a palace here, and the great causeway passed through the village. Not a sign of it now remains. Rice and cotton are cultivated. There is an Imamzadeh here. The climate of Aliabad even in the winter is damp and hot, and the place is full of mosquitoes and other unpleasant insects.

If the traveller gets to Aliabad after dark, it is advisable to spend the night here before going to Barfrush, as the Talar River has to be forded, and the road too gets bad after the rains. There is a kava khanch¹ here where accommodation can be obtained, and food supplied. There is also a caravan-serai.

Just outside Aliabad, the road divides, the one on the right going to Asterabad and Gaz, while the one on the left goes to Barfrush and Meshed-i-Sar. The Barfrush road goes through absolutely flat country with rice-fields on either side. Here and there a Takieh or place for the Passion Play during the Moharram is passed. The Talar River is next forded, and Barfrush is reached. But before giving a description of Barfrush and Meshed-i-Sar, and the cities of Mazanderan, I will give a description of the province itself, and its climate, produce, etc.

¹ Coffee-house.

CHAPTER XIII

MAZANDERAN AND ITS PRINCIPAL TOWNS

IN the Avesta, Mazanderan was the abode of the Mazainya Daevas, "the Demons of Mazanderan." Hell was peopled by Divs, Druges and Paris, and dragons and monsters, created by Angra-Mainyu, the evil spirit, to fight the good creation of Ahura Mazda. They dwelt in the north across the Elburz range. The gate of Hell was Mount Arezura in the Elburz range, and the province of Mazanderan, on the shores of the Caspian, was the ordinary abode of the Jins and Divs.

Coming now to the Shah-Namēh, we find that in the last years of Minucheher's reign, there was a war against Afrasiab, King of Turan, who compelled Minucheher to take refuge in the swamps of Tabaristan (Mazanderan) on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Finally peace was concluded, and Minucheher was allowed to rule over the country as far as he could shoot an arrow. He shot from Mount Demavend,¹ and the arrow fell at Merv, and according to one historian, on the banks of the Oxus.

The second Kainian King, Kaikaus (Kava Usa) entered on a campaign against Mazanderan, then inhabited by demons, the chief of them being the Div-i-Safid. The King, however, was taken prisoner with his army, but rescued by Rustam, who found him after seven adventures, even the very beasts of the forest taking sides in the conflict. In his seventh and last adventure, he fought the Div-i-Safid, and vanquished and killed him. With the aid of Rustam, Kaikaus ruled over men and demons alike, and built mighty fortresses in the Elburz; but the demons at last set a trap for him. One of them disguised as a slave, caused him to believe that his empire should not be confined to the earth, but that he should seek how the sun ended its course. The King chose four young eagles, which he harnessed to the throne and flew into the air, but when the eagles grew tired, they came down and left him at Amul in Mazanderan. The Great Lords of the Empire found him, set him on his throne again, where he reigned in peace. During and after the fall of the Sassanian dynasty, Mazanderan formed part of Tapuristan, the modern Tabaristan. About A.D. 900 it was given by the Khalif Mutazzid to Ismail Səmani, the founder of the Samanid dynasty of North Iran and Bokhara, as a reward for his services in conquering the rebellious Amr bin Leith. In the fourteenth century, Mazanderan was ruled by an independent Seyid dynasty. Mazanderan was the birthplace of Shah Abbas, and here he built many magnificent palaces, and when not at Isfahan, he resided here in sight of the Caspian. Here he planted 30,000 Christian families from the Turkish border, but thanks to the climate, within a short time, the 30,000 families were reduced to 4,000. In 1668, the Cossacks came down upon Mazanderan. In 1722, Peter the Great sent an Envoy to the Iranian Court at Isfahan claiming compensation, for serious damage done to the property of Russian merchants, in the town of Shemakhi. The Envoy, when he got to Isfahan, found that Shah Sultan Husain had been deposed, and that Mahmud the Afghan usurper was on the throne, who declined to take any responsibility, and said that the Czar had better safeguard his own trade. In July 1722, Peter assembled an army of 30,000 men at Astrakhan, sailed against Derbend and captured it. He was proceeding to march against Baku and Shemakhi, when the Turks stepped in and told him that unless he withdrew he would have to fight the Turks as well as the Iranians. He then returned to Astrakhan, offering to surrender Resht, which was then besieged by the Afghans. Early in 1723, Peter

¹ See illustration on page 70.

despatched another army. Resht surrendered, and the greater part of Gilan fell into his hands. In the same year, Baku was bombarded and captured. Shah Tahmasp sent an Ambassador to Peter, and a treaty was concluded on the 3rd September 1723. The terms were that the Russians were to drive the Afghans out of Iran, and reinstate Tahmasp on the throne ; while in return, the Shah ceded to Russia the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Asterabad, and the towns of Baku and Derbend, and the Shah undertook to furnish camels and provisions for the Russian army of invasion ; full liberty of commerce between the two countries was guaranteed. Peter died in 1725, and in the same year, the Russians took Lahijan. By a treaty concluded in 1732, Asterabad and Mazandaran were restored to Iran ; the Russians evacuated the Caspian in 1734, with only permission to manage the silk trade at the seaport of Enzali. Gilan was restored to Iran in 1735.

In Mazandaran and Asterabad, the wily eunuch Agha Mohammed Shah was organizing his forces, and increasing his following. Sheikh Vais, the son of Ali Murad Khan Zend, who held the throne for four years from 1781 to 1785, was despatched by his father to crush him, and recover Mazandaran. Though at first successful, he was deserted by his followers and compelled to retire.

On the accession of Agha Mohammed Shah, Mazandaran remained secure in the hands of Iranians.

Mazandaran, derived from "Maz" (the Pehlavi word for mountains) and "anderun" (within), i.e., the space between the mountains and the sea, starts in the neighbourhood of Asterabad on the east and runs for a distance of 220 miles along the coast of the Caspian to an unimportant river which is the boundary of Gilan. This range of country is marked by a strong individuality, and is unlike anything else seen in the rest of Iran except Gilan. The wide deserts, the cheerless sand, and the bleak mountains now give way to a country rich in water, full of stagnant swamps, where mosquitoes breed, and so full of trees and forests, that without the aid of a guide, a pathway can scarcely be seen through the jungle.

Situated along the coast of the Caspian which is eighty-four feet below the level of the Black Sea, there is a marked influence of the Caspian on the climate, which can best be expressed in Khanikoff's words:—"If we compare the arid and sorrowful uniformity of the saline plains on the north shore of the Caspian with the luxuriant and almost tropical vegetation on its southern coast, we are struck with the contrast presented by the development of organic nature upon the two borders of the same inland sea. In the north, the donkey can scarcely understand the rigour of the climate ; in the south, the tiger of Bengal is a common animal. Near Astrakhan, it is all that the grape can do to ripen ; in the gulf of Asterabad on the semi-island of Potemkin, the palm tree grows wild, and sugarcane and cotton are cultivated with success. Finally, every year, the northern parts of the sea are fast-bound in ice ; whilst before they have had time to melt, everything is in full bloom on the coast of Gilan and Mazandaran." Lord Curzon thinks¹ that the explanation is that the vapour-charged clouds arising from the Caspian, and drifting southwards under the effect of the prevalent winds, impinge against the slopes of the Elburz, and descend in rain to the lowlands below. Khanikoff thought that the dissolvent process was hastened by currents of hot air flowing in a north-westerly direction from the Great Central Desert, and that where they meet the northern blasts, they melt in rain. The rainfall of the Caspian provinces is more than in any other part of Iran. The climate is distinctly unhealthy, and malaria is rampant.

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

The north-western winds in the Caspian have piled up along the shore a long chain of sandhills, about thirty feet in height, and about three hundred yards in width. On the inner side of these, the rivers, descending to the sea with alluvial deposit, have formed morasses, and lagoons, where the waters lie stagnant. In cases where the current has cleared a way to the sea, the incoming resistance of the surf creates an outer bar, which renders the lake unfit for navigation. A bar is thus raised which prevents ships from coming in. These are the *murdabs* or dead waters found all along the Caspian Coast, and can be seen at Asterabad, Meshed-i-Sar and Enzali. The rivers and streams come down through jungles, their inner banks overgrown with dense trees, like alders, willows, ashes and poplars, forming swamps or torrents, or sluggish morasses, where reptiles breed. Pestilential vapours rise from the decaying vegetable matter. Quicksands too are found.

From these rivers and lagoons stretches a wide jungle to the mountain base. In the heart of this malarial forest, clusters of cottages are hidden away beneath the trees, and all that can be seen from a distance is the smoke issuing from them. Part of the jungle is cleared in places, where sugar-cane, cotton and rice are cultivated.

The trees are mostly deciduous, and travellers have reported the oak, plane, maple, elm, ash, walnut, yew, lime, juniper and box. There are wild vines, wild hops, wild figs, plums, pears, apples, oranges and peaches. Wild strawberries too are found. While, in the springtime, are found primroses, violets and other flowers. Wild animals too abound here. Tigers of great size are common, and leopards, wolves, bears, wild-boar, jackals, lynxes, wild sheep, deer and wild goats are also seen; in the swamps are found duck, snipe and other wild-fowl.

It is between the main jungle and the wooden slopes and buttresses of the Elburz which descend towards the sea, that the greatest part of the inhabitants are found well hidden away. Here are produced oranges, lemons, peaches, quinces, olives and pomegranates. Here too, between the spurs, are wonderful glens and ravines.

In the open places of the forest zone, on the slopes of the mountains, are the *Yeilaks* or the summer quarters to which the richer folk retire from the plains and lowlands in the heat, and to which the nomad villagers drive their cattle for summer pasture.

Behind the forest zone rise the barren peaks of the Elburz range, some covered in snow.

Produce.—The produce of Mazanderan is rice, cotton and sugar. The timber was used once for shipbuilding. Nadir Shah commissioned his shipwright, John Elton, to construct for him a flotilla on the Caspian from the timber of Mazanderan. The timber was also transported across the whole of Iran to the Gulf for the same purpose. Boxwood is exported to Russia and England.

The rivers and lagoons swarm with fish, sturgeon, salmon, mullet, trout and carp. The fishery is in the hands of the Russians.

Such a country with such a climate is bound to have its influence on the people. The people have been described by their countrymen as notorious for their stupidity and brutality. There is a saying amongst the Parsis of Bombay, "he is a big Mazanderani," meaning thereby that he is a



Mount DEMAVEND.

By kind permission of the Iran League



PUL-I-QUDUM, ON THE ROAD TO RESHT.

cunning, crafty fellow. Even the well-to-do people are ignorant and crafty. Their faces are yellow and sallow, and most of them are subject to malaria.

The costume of the peasantry differs too from that which is worn in the rest of Iran. Their shulwars or trousers are made of a woollen stuff called *chakab*, which can resist the thorns better than cotton. On their legs, they wear bands of webbing rolled round and round called "*paitava*." Their sandals are made of raw hide fastened over the instep and ankle by a thong. Most of the people now are forced to wear Pahlavi hats.

The four important cities of Mazanderan are Sari, Barfrush, and Meshed-i-Sar and Amul.

Sari, twenty-five miles north-north-east of Zirab, is the old capital of Mazanderan. The population is about 8,000. It was identified by D'Anville and Rennell as the *Zadracarta* of the ancients, where Alexander halted fifteen days and offered sacrifice. It was first the capital and residence of the independent sovereigns who ruled here in the later Middle Ages. Agha Mohd. Shah when he was fighting for the throne, also selected it as his capital. He built the palace, which is now in ruins, which contained the pictures of the battles of Shah Ismail and Nadir Shah. There were three towers of the Arab period standing some years ago, but they have all been destroyed. The largest was known as the *Gumbaz-i-Selim-wa-Tur*, and was believed to be the tomb of Hassan-ed-Dowleh, a descendant of the Dilemi Kings of the fifth century A.H. The streets are stone-paved, and the town has a picturesque appearance.

Barfrush, the present capital of Mazanderan, is situated one hundred and twenty miles north-east of Teheran on an excellent and recently constructed motor road. Three centuries ago, it was a mere village, but the improved communications with Teheran have made it the most important town on the Caspian sea-board. Agha Mohd. Shah was surprised, and made captive here, through the treachery of his brother Reza Kuli, who loaded him with chains, and deliberated whether he should deprive him of sight or put him to death. Agha Mohd. Shah had friends from those employed to guard him, and he was restored to liberty and power through their exertions, and coupled with those of his brothers, Jaffar Kuli Khan, and Mustapha Kuli Khan who remained faithful to him. The town is situated in the midst of a flat country, fifteen miles from the mountains and the same distance from the sea-shore. It is built amongst tall forest trees, about two miles from the Babul River, and is not seen from the exterior. It is surrounded by rice, sugar and cotton plantations. The houses are small and stand in groups, and are surrounded by mud walls. In the centre of a lake, reed-clad and full of wild-fowl, is a green island, thick with orange trees and poplars; between the foliage is seen a red-tiled mansion. A long low bridge with pointed stone arches leads across the lake to the island. This is one of the Shah's palaces in ruins. The windows are destroyed, the roof dilapidated, and the courtyard overgrown with trees. Oranges and lemons are grown in the neighbourhood. There are an Iranian Telegraph Office and a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran. There is also a Russian Consular Agent, and a considerable number of Jews.

Meshed-i-Sar

Fifteen miles north of Barfrush along a passable motor road (quite impassable during the rains) is the port of Meshed-i-Sar, at the mouth of the Babul River. Russian steamers touch here, and there is a considerable trade with Astrakhan. The Murdab is clearly seen, and the steamers lie out in the offing at a distance of two or three miles from the shore and cargo can only be disembarked on flat-bottomed barges in calm weather. It is a small village, and there is plenty of fishing done here. There is

an Iranian Custom-House and a Lighthouse, and an Imamzadeh of a brother of the Imam Reza. The town is well laid out and the bazaars are clean, and well stocked with Russian goods. According to Stack ("Six Months in Persia," Vol. II, p. 202), "The coast is a line of low sandhills, over-looking a steep and narrow beach of dark grey sand. There are no shells on the shore, no birds in the air, no seaweed, no fish, nothing but tortoises and frogs."

Amul

The other town in Mazanderan of any importance is Amul. Kaikaus landed here enticed by the demons. In the time of Yakut it was the first city in Tabaristan, and noted for its cotton and carpet manufactures. It is situated on the banks of the Harhaz, twenty-three miles south-west of Bafrush, the river being crossed outside the town by a very old stone bridge between eighty and one hundred yards long, having twelve arches. The houses here are built of wood, and roofed or thatched with straw. The bazaars are large and well supplied. There are the ruins of a mausoleum, said to have been built by Shah Abbas, over the remains of Sayed Qavvam-ud-din, a saintly monarch of Mazanderan who in the fourteenth century raised himself to the throne by his virtues and abilities. He was better known as Mir Buzurg, came into power in 1358, and died in 1379. His descendants ruled Mazanderan until the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the vicinity are a number of square towers with pyramidal roofs, which were the sepulchres of holy men in the first century after the Arab conquest. It was once connected to Mahmudabad on the Caspian by rail. There is no motor road from Amul to Teheran or from Barfrush to Amul. The alternative now is to go back from Barfrush to Teheran, and then procure horses to get to Amul, or to proceed from Barfrush to Amul on horseback and then through the pass to Teheran. Horses will be difficult to procure in Barfrush. Granting that they are procured, the return journey from Barfrush to Amul and then on to Teheran is interesting. The road from Amul goes over the main range of the Elburz, and was made by order of Nasr-ed-din Shah in 1877-78 by General Gastiger Khan, an Austrian engineer officer in the Iranian service. The distance is about hundred and twenty miles, and the places passed are Parus, Shahzadeh, Rainch, skirting the eastern base of Demavend, Immamzadeh Hashim, Ah and Jajrud. The scenery is superb. Between Bund-i-Burideh and Rainch is a rock sculpture of Nasr-ed-din Shah on horseback, looking at the traveller, with ten Ministers in uniform, standing five on either side of him. The figures are life-size, and stand out in relief about three inches. There is an inscription which sounds the praises of His Majesty and commemorates the making of the road. As Lord Curzon says, "The idea is a somewhat belated and turgid imitation of the Sassanian model."

Of the scenery from Amul to Teheran, Stack wrote the following description in 1881 :—

"Our march to Amul was the loveliest I made in Persia; but indeed one could hardly believe that this was Persian scenery, with its forest paths and meadow glades, and broad river bordered by tall and leafy growth of oaks. I thought of the leagues of brown or black desert, the bare sand ridges, the salt hills, white and crimson and green, the dry, clear air, and the bold and sharply defined forms and colours, that I had seen during my wanderings in Persia till now; but here was an atmosphere laden with soft, invisible vapour and all the shapes of mountains and valley were rounded and clothed with vegetation, hiding the bare outlines of the rock and all the colours were the blue and white of the cloud-flecked sky above, and varied shades of green all around us."

CHAPTER XIV

FROM TEHERAN TO RESHT VIA KAZVIN

FROM Amul to Resht, one can go along the coast of the Caspian on horseback in the autumn. In the spring the rivers are full, and cannot be forded. There are many quicksands. To go by motor one must go from Teheran. The road from Teheran is a Russian road, and was opened to wheeled traffic in 1899, and avoids the steep Kharzan Pass. The villages passed on the way to Kazvin are Shahabad, Sankarabad, Yengi-Imam, Qishlaq, Husainabad and Kavandeh. Plenty of water can be obtained on the road. Oil and petrol for cars can be got in nearly every village.

Leaving Teheran by the Kasvin Gate, the road begins to ascend very gently. Now and then a rectangular castellated mud wall is passed, enclosing a cluster of fruit trees and vegetable gardens; then miles and miles of barren dreary country. The Elburz Mountains lie to the north and are not far distant from the road. Fifteen miles from Teheran, the village of Shahabad is passed, altitude 3,874 feet. Another sixteen miles bring the traveller to the village of Sangi where there is a ruined caravanserai of stone. It has seven towers, one at each angle of the square, and one between the three sides; on the farther side is the gateway. In the centre of the courtyard is a building with four large rooms; in each side of the square are six small and one large room, and in each corner a circular vaulted room for stabling. Over the gateway are three rooms. It was supposed to have been built by Anushirwan the Just (A.D. 530—578), the greatest of the Sassanian Kings. The place is in bad repute, and many travellers have been murdered here.

Sankarabad has an altitude of 4,210 feet, and after that is Yengi Imam (altitude 4,110 feet). Here there is an hotel with good accommodation and a caravanserai. There is an Imamzadeh with a blue dome.

About twenty-eight miles from Kazvin, and to the left of the road is the village of Qishlaq, where there used to be a royal pleasure house. After passing the village of Kavandeh, altitude 3,780 feet, Kazvin is reached, in three hours from Teheran.

Kazvin—Elevation 4,165 feet. Population 40,000

Places to stay: (1) The Grand Hotel—proprietor, Borzou Shapur Parsi. Accommodation good, food excellent. (2) The Metropole Hotel.

The founder of Kazvin is supposed to be Shapur II (Shapur Zulaktaf). In 1078 it was captured by Hassan-es-Sabah, the chief of the so-called Assassins, whose impregnable stronghold at Alamut in the mountains was only thirty miles away. The word "Assassin" is a corruption from "Hashashin."

Kazvin attained the zenith of its renown during the Sefavi dynasty. Shah Tahmasp I (A.D. 1524-1576) made it his seat of government, but Shah Abbas the Great moved the capital to Isfahan. Sir Thomas Herbert in 1627 described Kazvin as "equal for grandeur to any other city in the Persian Empire, Spahawn (i.e., Isfahan) excepted"; that its walls were seven miles in circuit, and its population 200,000. Here Sir Robert Shirley died on the 13th July 1627, and was buried under the threshold of the door; and here, ten days later, his companion Sir D. Cotton died of dysentery. Chardin in 1674 described its walls as then in ruins, and says that

its chief feature was the palaces of the grandees, which had passed from father to son, for generations. It was taken by the Afghans in 1722, and by the Turks in 1725. Earthquakes completed its ruin. During the Great European War, 1914-18, Kazvin was an important place. The city has considerably improved under the present regime.

The present city is situated at the foot of the mountains leading to Gilan, and at the extremity of a fine plain, and is surrounded by gardens and vineyards in every direction. Coming from Teheran, nothing is seen of the town till it is closely approached. It is then found to be a walled city with gates. The gates are modern, and nine in number—The Teheran Gate, in good preservation; Darbrai, on the old Teheran road; Shahzadeh Husain on the Qum road; Maklavak on the Tabriz road, broken down; Pambariseh, Shaikhabad, Gusfand, Maidan on the Resht road, which does not exist now, and Darabukush leading to Alamut and Kohistan. There are three main streets, the Khiaban-i-Vapoor leading from the Teheran Gate to the Post House, wherein is situated the Hotel Metropole, the Khiaban-i-Alagappi leading from the Post House to the Government House; and the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi at right angles to it, leading from Government House to the Resht road. Not far from the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi is the Grand Hotel, whose proprietor is a Zardusti, well known and respected. An enterprising man. Borzou Shapur Parsi, started a soda-water factory some years ago. In the Khiaban-i-Palavi is a public garden with a bandstand, and a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran. These are the only three motor roads. The rest of the streets are narrow, and tortuous.

The bazaars of Kazvin are large and vaulted, and almost any cheap European commodity can be found there. The chief work that is being done there is what is known as Zinjan work, silver and gold filigree work, which is very pretty.

The manufactures of Kazvin are carpets, and kerbas (a kind of coarse cotton cloth), velvet, brocades, iron ware and sword blades. The raw products of Kazvin are vitriol, grain, dried fruits, treacle of grapes, sheep and horses.

The houses of Kazvin are built of baked and unbaked bricks. There are cisterns in most of the houses, and a few wells have been dug ninety to one hundred feet deep. Water is scarce, and the plain is intersected in all directions by watercourses or kanats. The kanats require a few words to themselves. They are big conical heaps with a pit in the centre running across the plains in long, interminable rows, towards the mountains. A vertical hole is bored in the ground, over which a windlass has been erected. The superfluous earth is raised up to the surface, the earth removed in the excavation being embanked all round the aperture of the shaft. When the required depth is attained, a tunnel is made with the hands and a shovel in a horizontal direction, just big enough to let the workman through. Another shaft is made for ventilation, and to raise to the surface the displaced earth. These canals not only bring fresh, limpid water to the city, but also help to irrigate the fields. Near Kazvin are seen several of these aqueducts in parallel rows.

Besides an Armenian church and a school in Kazvin, there are two conspicuous mosques. One is the Masjid-i-Jama, in a semi-dilapidated condition. It was built by the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, in the eighth century, and has two broken blue-tiled minarets, and a vast court. The other one is the Masjid-i-Shah built originally by Shah Tahmasp and Shah

Abbas, and rebuilt by Agha Mohammed Shah, and Feth Ali Shah, upon the remains of the old edifice. There are also the remains of the Royal Palace built by Tahmasp, and enlarged by Shah Abbas, though the high gate attached to it, called Ali Kapi, is still intact. Here are the offices of the Nazmiyeh, and permits for cars are required before leaving the city. Inspection of all cars is done here.

Sir John Malcolm in his "History of Persia" (Volume 2, page 6), mentions a curious custom in Kazvin. "The inhabitants of Kazvin are chiefly descended from those Turkish tribes which have long pastured their flocks on the plains in the vicinity of the city. They almost all either cultivate the soil, or employ themselves in carrying on commerce with the shores of the Caspian. These habits of life render them hardy and robust, and they are remarkable for having preserved the rude and ungovernable spirit of their ancestors. Among its other privileges, Kazvin has always boasted one of a very extraordinary nature. It may be termed a right of insurrection which they resort to in cases of violence and oppression. The lower orders act, on these occasions, under the direction of their magistrates, who seldom proceed to this extremity except when they have no hope of relief from any other proceeding. In A.D. 1723 (A.H. 1136) they could expect no redress by any application to Mahmood, the Afghan, from the cruelty and injustice of those whom he had appointed to rule them; and independent of the oppressions they suffered, their religion, and prejudices led them to regard the Afghans with peculiar horror. In consequence of these feelings the magistrates of Kazvin met secretly, and on the evening of the 8th January, the signal for a lootee bazaar, or 'general insurrection' was given. The Afghans were at once attacked in every quarter. The loss of the Afghans was about 2,000 men, besides all their property. They were forced instantly to retreat to Isfahan."

Situated in the province of Irak, the elevation gives it a very hot but dry, healthy climate with comparatively cool nights.

About thirty miles from Kazvin, on a range of hills crossed by the Kharzan Pass, is the famous castle of Alamut, the headquarters of the so-called Assassins. In the latter half of the third century of the Hijra, a seventh religion was promulgated in the name of the seventh in succession from Ali, the divine Mahdi, son of Ismail. One of their leaders, Karmat, committed horrible excesses. The Assassins were an offshoot of this sect, and were led by Hassan-es-Sabah, who was a schoolfellow of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Minister of the Seljukes, and of Omar Khayyam, the astronomer-poet. As regards their religion, some of the questions propounded to enquirers were: "What is the origin of the mystic number 7?", "Why did God take seven days to create the world, when he could have easily created it in one moment?", "Why are there seven orifices in the human body?", "What in reality are the torments of hell?", "How can it be true that the skins of the damned will be changed into a fresh skin, in order that this skin, which has not participated in their sins, may be submitted to the tortures of hell?"

These fanatics spread in Iran and to the West, and the Crusaders came into contact with their Syrian branch. Raymond, Count of Tripoli, was murdered in 1149, and Conrad of Montferrat, titular king of Jerusalem, in 1192. The sleeping-draught given to kill the victims contained Cannabis, Indica or Hashish, whence their name Hashashin, which the Crusaders corrupted into Assassin, and brought the name to England. This lasted for two centuries, and the Assassins were eventually crushed by the Mongol

Hulagu Khan, in the thirteenth century. About this time the Assassins despatched members to England and to the Courts of Europe, to form an alliance with them against the Mongols. Sir Percy Sykes¹ says :—

“ It is interesting to note that these romantic mediæval Sheikhs, after being defeated in a campaign in Baluchistan became British subjects with their headquarters at Poona.”

Hulagu Khan completely destroyed the castle of the Alamuts, but it must have been rebuilt again, for the Sefavi Kings later on used it as a prison for disgraced persons of high rank. When their existence was found irksome, they were pitched off the high rock on which the castle stands.

Kazvin is at the junction of four roads—the road to Tabriz and Azberaijan, the road to Hamadan and Baghdad, the road to Teheran, and the road to Resht and Gilan. Leaving Kazvin by the Resht Gate which is now completely broken down, the road has a slight ascent till the village of Agha Baba (elevation 4,980 feet) is reached. The village is situated fourteen miles from Kazvin, where there is accommodation for travellers in some rooms built over the gateway of the village. There is a steady descent after leaving Agha Baba, through rugged country, in zigzag fashion, till a large basin with a solitary hut is encountered. It has the name of Kort. The hills are devoid of vegetation and volcanic in origin, but present contrasts in colouring.

“ Not a tree, not a bird, not a tussock of grass,
The great hills sleeping a death-like sleep.”

Sir M. Durand.

As one goes on, large patches of sulphurous earth are noticed on the mountain-side with dark red or black soil above it. Lower down, on account of the saturation with sulphurous matter, there is a rich dark blue colouring with greenish tints and yellow patches, the earth round about being of a dark sienna colour. The peaks are mostly conical with deep cut channels.

The village of Mulla Ali, in the Darreh-i-Hassan Khan, is passed, a pretty spot with green trees all around. It is one of the winter quarters of the Chigini nomads, and completely deserted in summer. The road then proceeds through a narrow valley through rugged and much broken up and very picturesque country till Paichinar is reached at an altitude of 1,515 feet, thirty-two miles from Kazvin. From Paichinar, the road skirts the Paichinar River, a tributary of the Safid Rud, as far as the Loshan Bridge, and then the Shah Rud. One and a half miles from Paichinar, the Shah Rud receives the Yuz Bashi, a shallow mountain stream. Between Agha Baba and Paichinar was the old cart road that went through the Kharzan Pass. The motor road avoids the pass. After skirting the river, the road passes through a mountainous region, with a low plateau in the centre of an extensive alluvial plain. The little village of Jamalabad is passed on the right bank of the Safid Rud. It is excessively hot in summer and uninhabited, but infested by ticks. Turning a corner, after a descent, Menzil (or Manjil) is exposed to view.

Manjil, population 1,600, is situated on the right bank of the Kizzil Ozzun or, as it is here called, the Safid Rud, and at the western extremity of the Elburz range. It is famous for its terrific winds, which coming from the north-east and from the south, meet here and whistle through the gorge with concentrated fury. It is surrounded by hills on all sides. To the

¹ Sykes, “ Ten Thousand Miles in Persia.”

east is a mountainous region, the Biwazin Yarak range, about 7,000 feet high; further north, a peak 7,850 feet, and south-west, hills of about 7,500 feet, and the high Mount Salamber, 11,290 feet. Manjil is the last village in Gilan, and has a Russian Station House and a factory. There is also a Persian Post-house and Telegraph Office.

Leaving Manjil the river is crossed by a seven-arched iron bridge, which has now replaced the old unserviceable Iranian bridge. Here the wind blows at its very worst. The scenery now gains in ruggedness and grandeur, and the road runs between mountains in narrow gorges. The mountains are without any vegetation to start with; at first there are low bushes and shrubs, but near Rubdar there are olive runs.

Rubdar is situated on the left bank of the Safid Rud, seven miles north of Manjil. There are extensive olive trees here, and the oil is used for the preparation of soap. About 1878, a German tried to prepare olive oil for exportation to Europe, but the speculation failed. At Rubdar refreshments can be obtained, tea and Iranian bread and "kabobs." There are two hotels here where one can spend the night if required.

From Rubdar onwards, the vegetation begins to increase, and the forest belt is encountered. The road goes along the left bank of the Safid Rud at a steady descent as far as Rustamabad (altitude 630 feet). This village is thirty-four and a half miles from Resht. The hills are thickly wooded but the forest ends here. The village is one mile west of the post-house: and north-east are the Darfak Hills, rising to 9,000 feet, the northern side of which is very rocky and steep. Here woodland is variegated by open glades and rocks, and the road is lined with huge trees on either side. Eight miles further on, a bridge over the Siah Rud is crossed, and then ten miles from there is the village of Qudum (elevation 273 feet) only sixteen miles from Resht. The lights of Resht are visible from a distance, and the Russian Consulate is situated right on the road before getting into the city.

Note :—See illustration on page 70.

CHAPTER XV

GILAN AND ITS CITIES

“Let him who wants to die be made Governor of Gilan.”

Iranian Proverb.

THE province of Gilan, whose derivation is taken from the Gelæ who once inhabited the south shores of the Caspian, commences from the river where Mazanderan ends, and continuing for one hundred and fifty miles round the south-west corner of the Caspian Sea, terminates in the mountain district of Talash.

The staple produce of Gilan once was silk. This silk traffic brought Iran into contact with Europe, led to the interchange of embassies, and the formation of treaties from the sixteenth century onwards. In A.D. 550 the Emperor Justinian introduced silk-worm from China into Europe. In the tenth century A.D. Al-Istakhri spoke of the silk which was produced in great quantity in Tabaristan (i.e., Mazanderan). Marco Polo three centuries later stated that the merchants of Genoa had begun to export “the silk which is called Ghellæ” from the Caspian. In the seventeenth century, the export of silk from the Persian Gulf was in Dutch hands. In the eighteenth century, Peter the Great tried to make an arrangement with the Armenian traders to divert the silk traffic from the north into Russia. Later on, the Russians attempted the business themselves. On the death of Peter, Elton and Hanway, two English merchants, tried to secure the trade. On the fall of the Sefavi dynasty, there was a falling off in the produce of silk, but it revived again under the Kajars. In 1864, disease appeared, and by 1869 the destruction was complete.

In 1730, regardless of his treaty with Russia, Shah Tahmasp made a grant of Mazanderan, together with Khorassan, Seistan and Kerman to Nadir Shah, as a reward for driving out the Afghans. In the latter part of Nadir's reign, oppression prevailed, and in the disturbances following on his death, a local chief Hidayet Khan raised himself and the province of Gilan to an independent position. When Kerim Khan Zend came to the throne, he left Hidayet Khan in charge of Gilan, but exacted an annual tribute. Hidayet Khan kept a large army, and observed great pomp. When Agha Mohammed Shah came to the throne, Hidayet Khan resisted him, but was defeated and put to death. Since then Gilan passed into the hands of Iran.

The climate of Gilan is very unhealthy. It is supposed to be damper than that of Mazanderan. Its people too are less vigorous and brave. The heat is unbearable in the summer, and it is impossible for a European to live there during July and August. The Iranians when they want to wish ill to their enemies, wish them to be stung by a scorpion from Kashan, or be made Governor of Gilan. The province is full of malaria, but apart from the malaria so common to Gilan and Mazanderan, ankylostomiasis and ascaris are frequent causes of unhealthiness. The santolin given for ascaris is mostly imported from the Turkoman steppes in Central Asia. Malaria coupled with ankylostomiasis accounts for the sallow, unhealthy-looking faces one sees everywhere in these provinces.

The peasant houses of Gilan are a striking feature. The roofs are thatched and projecting, not unlike Cockington Forge in Devonshire. Reeds and rice stubble are used for roofs. From reeds, straw matting is often

made. Long stems are bound together by cord, and over that tiles are laid, which act as a background to the thatching. In Gilan bands of gipsies are not rare.

The forest belt and the mountains of Gilan are of the same type as those of Mazanderan. The traveller, however, who goes to both these places along the main road, will not see so much forest on the Resht road as on the Barfrush road, because the trees along the former road have been cut down. To get into the jungle of Gilan the visitor must go south of Siakel, or south of Fumen. There are any amount of olive and wild pomegranate trees, and above Rubdar, ibex can be found, and duck and snipe and pheasant.

The principal town of Gilan is Resht, altitude seventy-seven feet, population 40,000.

Situated in a low swampy ground, fifteen miles from the Caspian Sea, Resht has an unhealthy and damp climate. It is situated between two small rivers, the Siah Rubdar to the east and the Gaohar Rud to the west, which re-unite and flow into the Bay of Enzali. Originally Resht was buried in jungle, like most of the towns in this province, but the Russians during their occupation about two hundred years ago, cleared the jungle as far as the mountains, though a good bit has reappeared again.

In the time of Shah Abbas II, and in the reigns of Kerim Khan Zend and Agha Mohammed Shah, Resht was celebrated for its commerce, and its silk trade to the Mediterranean ports and the Iranian Gulf. Caravans came here from Bokhara, India, Turkey, and other countries.

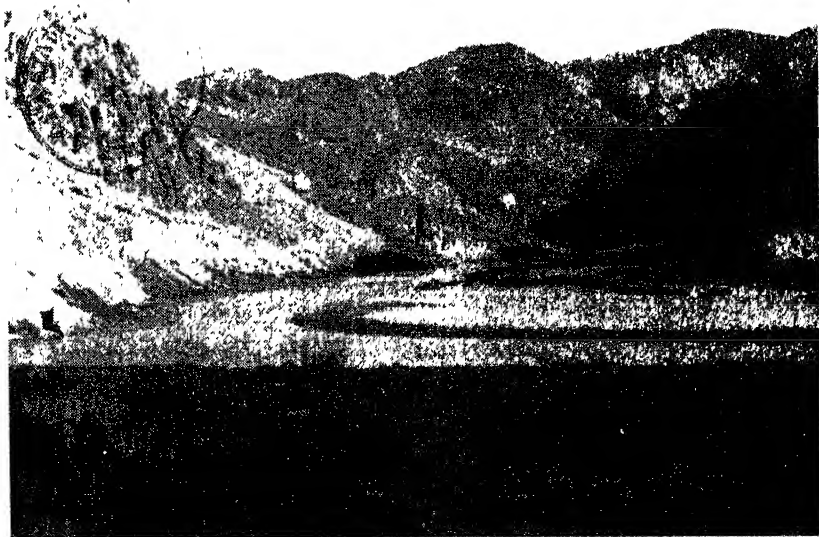
In 1822 Fraser was imprisoned here, but escaped on foot only to be recaptured and brought back again. In 1830-31 it was nearly devastated by the plague, but revived on account of its silk industry. In 1899 there was a drought in the province and the Resht bazaars were burnt, but in 1900 it rose again like a Phoenix from its ashes. In 1909 the Iranians boycotted Russian goods, especially sugar, the price of which went up considerably. The boycott, however, died a natural death.

The houses of Resht are re-tiled and raised from the ground with broad verandahs and overhanging eaves. Hedgerows and gardens abound. The population is mainly Mahomedan, but Russia has a predominating influence and has a large number of Armenians and Christians residing here looking after her interests.

The bazaars occupy a considerable portion of the town, and are traversed by narrow streets. They consist of three or four narrow streets running parallel with each other, and crossed at right angles by other streets. The streets are paved, but the bazaars are not covered. There are several caravanserais in the bazaars together with many public places, such as the Maidan-i-Buzurg, the Maidan-i-Kuchak, the Maidan-i-Darogha. To the west of the town is the Sabz Maidan, made into a public garden by the Nasr-es-Sultan during his first governorship of Gilan. The maidan is near the residential quarter. The palace of the Governor was burnt by the Nationalists in 1909. The Government Bureau now occupies the place, while the postal and telegraph bureaux are in an adjoining building. Close to the Maidan-i-Sabz is the British Vice-Consulate, which was occupied by the Bolsheviks during the last Great European War. The Russian Consulate is on the Kazvin road. Opposite to it, but situated a long way away from the road and in a commanding position, are the barracks.



ENZALI (NOW PAHLAVI).



THE KIZZIL OZZUN RIVER, ENTERING THE GORGE IN THE QAFLAN KUH.
ON THE LEFT OF THE RIVER IS THE MAIN ROAD TO TABRIZ.

There are many mosques and sanctuaries in Resht. The most important is the Imamzadeh of Sayed Abu Jafar. It is situated near the Government House on a hillock in a cemetery. Near one of the entrances is a hexagonal tower with a conical roof all in brick, where is buried a Div Sultan, who was sent to Gilan by Shah Abbas I. In the sanctuary is an old wooden panel, with an inscription forming a part of an old wooden chest in which the saint was buried. The inscription says that it was the tomb of Sayed Abu Jafar, nephew of the Prophet, and foster-brother of the Imam Hassan Ibn Ali. The chest was made by Hisam-ud-din during the time that Mulla Shamsuddin was guardian of the sanctuary. The verses were written by Mohammed Sufi in A.H. 1009 (A.D. 1600-01).

The saint buried in the sanctuary is known as Abdul Fatha Fouman Ustad Jaafar, and without doubt it is he who has given the name to the Oustadsara quarter.

Probably the most ancient mosque in Resht is known as the Masjid-i-Safi. Hassan Beg, the author of "L'Ahsan-el-tavarikh," called it Masjid-i-Safid; he passed close to this mosque. In the courtyard of the mosque there is a pit where the women throw money to have their prayers heard. At the side was the shop of the jailor Mir Nadjin, who was constantly near the Prince, and was made Amir-ul-Umara when Ismail became Shah of Iran.

The Masjid-i-Jama has two interesting inscriptions in it. The first says that in Shawwal 1224 (A.D. 1809), several illegal taxes were abolished by Mohammed Reza Mirza, on his arrival in Gilan, on the advice of the Motamid Dowleh, and of the Munajjim Bashi. The second one is a copy of the act of donation by which Nasr-ed-din Shah assigned the revenue of Saravan to the maintenance of the Resht-Manjil road; to the repairs of the caravanseraï of the Imamzadeh Hashim; to that of the Resht-Lahijan road, and of the other roads of Gilan, the rest of the balance to be consecrated to the sanctuaries of the mosques of the province. The road to Manjil had the priority. Three administrators were appointed, one representing the priests, the second being chief of the Haji Samiclan, and the third, the chief of the merchants, but no Gilani.

In the Masjid-i-Khahar-i-Imam there is an inscription stating that at the request of Haji Mulla Rafi, Nasr-ed-din Shah abolished the taxes on the bakers, and permitted each one to make his bread in his own house. In this mosque is attached a sanctuary wherein is supposed to be buried Fatima, the sister of the Imam Reza.

In the Kiyab quarter is seen a tree called Aga Bibi Zeinab which is a place of pilgrimage for sterile women.

There are English hotels in Resht, very nice and very comfortable, the Hotel D'Europe being the best. The other two are the Savoy and the Metropole Hotels which are quite good.

CHAPTER XVI

GILAN AND ITS CITIES—*Continued*

Enzali¹—Foumen—Lahijan

WITH Resht as his base, the visitor can go round the principal cities of Gilan. Twenty-six miles from Resht, on a good motor road, is the port of Enzali,² now known as Pahlavi, where travellers from Russia used to land. The road goes as far as Ghazian, to the edge of the river, and the journey across the river has to be made by boat. The port stands on the south-west corner of the Caspian, on the westernmost of two long sandspits which separate the Murdab from the sea, Ghazian standing on the easterly sandspit. In Ghazian are two custom-houses for export and import. The bay of Enzali was a large breakwater formed by the waters of several streams and separated from the sea by the sandspits. Till a few years ago, steamers had to stop outside the sandspits, and people and cargo were disembarked in large flat-bottomed boats. If the sea was rough, and landing impossible, the passengers used to be taken back to Baku. Nowadays, dredging is being done in the Murdab, and steamers come right inside to a pier specially built for the purpose, and unload their cargo there.

The rise of Enzali dates back to A.D. 1815 (A.H. 1230) when Khoshru Khan Courji was sent to Gilan. Several public buildings were made in Enzali—the artillery park, the arsenal, the lighthouse, baths, a small bazaar of about twelve shops, and the garden of the Bagh-i-Shah. Four years later Motamed-Dowleh Mirza Abdul Vahhab built the palace of Motamedi and the shops to the south of the palace. In 1844, under Mohammed Shah, Mirza Ibrahim Khan Tabrizi was sent to Enzali to prepare ammunition and fortify the entrance of the lagoon. Enzali at present has a population of about 8,000 inhabitants, one or two small hotels, two schools modelled on European lines (one for girls and one for boys), one Russian and one Armenian school, one Armenian church recently built, after being destroyed by fire in the reign of Nasr-ed-din Shah, and four mosques. There is a garden on the left bank of the river with the palace of the former Governor close to it. The artillery park and the arsenal are now in ruins. The lighthouse constructed by Khosru Khan is situated at the northern extremity of the town. The shops and restaurants are mostly Russian, and the majority of goods sold is Russian.

There is a landing place a few hundred yards off the mouth of the Mutarabad River, and a certain number of ships are built here.

To the east of Ghazian is a Russian fishing establishment, the lake being full of fish.

II. *Foumen.*

Foumen is situated eighteen miles west south of Resht on a good motor road.

Foumen was the capital of the district of Foumen till 1573-75 when Jemshed Sultan transferred the capital to Resht. It is a village with a population of about 1,200, situated on the right bank of the Gaz Rubdar, and on the northern side of the Masuleh Pass into Azerbaijan. It has an old mosque and a school. Haji Jamil who murdered Elton in 1746, built a place there, and his descendants remained there for a considerable time,

¹ Now known as "Pahlavi."

² See illustration on page 80.

till the commencement of the reign of Nasr-ed-din Shah, when they migrated to Resht. The principal productions are rice, silk, tobacco, and honey, wheat and barley in small quantities. In Foumen itself there is nothing to see, but in the district of Foumen there are a few ruins:—

- (1) Kaleh Rud Khan—a castle occupying the crest of a mountain, near the upper course of the Kaleh Rud Khan River. The walls are of brick and stone, the entrance gate being defended by two solid towers.
- (2) On Alladad Kuh, a mountain to the south of Gasht, are the ruins of an old castle. It is said that the Kings of Foumen sent their goods and treasure there when they themselves fled for refuge to Kaleh Rud Khan.
- (3) At Minareh Bazaar, on the route to Gaskar, are the ruins of a round tower. Its summit and wall have fallen down in parts, and the interior of a tower with a staircase therein is visible. The tower is about ninety-five feet in height.
- (4) In the mountains of Anian, in a place called Zarin Kol, is the castle of Silsile Jadou.

At Azbar exist the ruins of a minaret, and at Galandi Rud, those of a castle built by Kalander Khan.

None of these are, however, accessible by motor.

III. *Lahijan.*

The most interesting excursion from Resht is to Lahijan, twenty-eight miles away on a fair motor road which goes on to Langarud and Khurramabad on the Caspian. It is almost typical of the towns of Gilan, and the scenery on the way is very beautiful.

The road to Enzali or Pahlavi is taken for about two miles, and then branches off abruptly to the right. After about twenty minutes' run, the bridge of Lal-i-Dasht is crossed. It is a high arched bridge, and cars with low clearance are apt to bump against the ground. Soon after, the picturesque village of Kuchi Isfahan with its long narrow street, with shops on either side, is passed and Reshtabad is reached. Between Reshtabad and Kisum the two arms of the Safid Rud have to be crossed twice by ferry. The road now becomes quite picturesque and passes through a forest. After leaving Kisum, the village of Bazi Ghurab is passed, where a road branches off to Siaha Kol. Later on the small Langarud River is forded, and about a mile from it is Lahijan. The washerwomen of Lahijan wash their clothes in the Langarud, and none of the peasant people worry about their veils.

Lahijan dates back from antiquity. According to local tradition, it was founded by Lahij, son of Sam, son of Noah. It was formerly known under the name of Dar-ul-Imareh, and latterly as Lahijan-el-Mubarak. It was independent until the seventeenth century.

In 1306-07 Lahijan was occupied by Ouljaitu Sultan. It was the residence of Sayed Amir Kai, and after the fall of that dynasty, that of the Safavi Governor of Biepitch. Earthquakes, pillage and burning have reduced it to a shadow of its former greatness. In 1485 there was a big earthquake. In 1502-03 the town was sacked by troops of the Amir Hishamuddin of Foumen. The Koran and other books were taken away, and five

hundred young girls and women were taken in captivity, but sold again later on to their parents and husbands. Lahijan was again sacked in 1504-05, and later on in 1508-09 when its castle was destroyed.

In Shawwal 1000 A.H. (A.D. 1592), Shah Abbas came to Gilan, demolished the garden in the front of the castle where were fruits and flowers of all kinds, and converted it into a polo ground. This place is now known as the Sabz Maidan.

Kutbuddin Lahiji mentions a fire in A.D. 1648 when his house was burnt, along with his library which contained six hundred volumes. He also speaks of an earthquake in A.D. 1677-78 on the Id-i-Qurban, at the hour of the morning prayer, and which lasted for ten hours, when all the mosques and, in particular, the Masjid-i-Jama, with its minarets, were destroyed, as also the sanctuaries, the mausoleums, the bridges and the baths.

The Russians, during their occupation, built two forts at Lahijan and surrounded the town with a moat. In A.D. 1749, after the death of Ibrahim Mirza, Lahijan was sacked by the Amarlus. It was devastated by the plague in 1832, and by another conflagration in A.D. 1880.

The present village is situated on the right bank of the Langarud, and being more elevated than the rest of Gilan, its climate is healthier than that of most other cities. People from Resht come here for change of air.

The most interesting part of Lahijan is the Maidan-i-Sabz and its neighbourhood to the east of the town. It is a big place surrounded with shops. Not only are most of the shops situated here, but also the most revered sanctuary of the whole district, known as the Chehar Padshah (or Four Kings). Originally it was the place of repose of Sayed Khor Kia, who was put to death in A.D. 1249-50, but later on certain sovereigns of the Amir Kai dynasty were interred round his tomb. The entrance door is in carved wood, and has an inscription dated A.H. 1015 (A.D. 1606-07). There is an inscription on the sarcophagus which belongs to the eighth century A.H. The sanctuary possesses two ancient Korans, one in Cufic characters, of which the first and last pages are missing, the date of the other being A.H. 883 (A.D. 1478-79). Close to the sanctuary is a mosque.

The Masjid-i-Jama is also found in this quarter. An obscure arched passage called the Tak-i-Gabri, which is attached to the mosque, is supposed to be part of an ancient fire temple on the ruins of which were erected the mosque.

On a big tablet of marble is engraved an edict by Shah Sultan Husain dated in A.H. 1106 (A.D. 1694-95), ordering the closing down of gambling dens, houses of ill fame, prohibiting the sale of liquors, and the smoking of hashish, and stopping pigeon-racing, cock-fighting, bull-fighting, and making illegal the maintenance of animals for that purpose.

It is related that a merchant had a black slave whom he sent to Lahijan to buy a few things for him. Instead of doing so, the slave constructed the great mosque. On his return, when he was questioned about his purchases, he replied, "I have made some purchases, but they are not for this world." He then explained what he had done, and his master gave him his liberty. A Madrasseh or college is attached to the Masjid-i-Jama.

Close to the Sabz Maidan is the tomb of Mir Shahid, Sayed of Firozkuh, who came to Lahijan where he was put to death; another sanctuary is that

of Mir Shamsuddin which has a sarcophagus of wood. An inscription on one side states that the tomb is that of the Amir Shamsuddin El-Mousavi, that the sarcophagus was completed in A.H. 1017 (A.D. 1608-09), and that the inscription is the work of Sayed Mohammed bin Daoud Kia. An inscription on the other side states that the sarcophagus covering the tomb of the Amir Shems-ud-din El Hoseini was made by the order of Khan Sultan Bibi, when Derwish Kasim was guardian of the sanctuary in A.H. 1018 (A.D. 1609-10).

The Urdu Bazaar, near the Maidan-i-Salz, was formerly known as the Kaleh. This castle was destroyed by the troops of Amir Hisamuddin Foumen in A.D. 1508-09 and rebuilt by Sultan Ahmad Khan. In A.D. 1592 Shah Abbas encamped his troops round the castle. Later on it was occupied for a long time by the Sefavi Governor of Biepitch, and it is not known when it was demolished. The bazaars are extensive and full of goods, and the shops are well arranged. The staple commodity is silk.

In the Gabonay quarter of Lahijan, there are two ancient sanctuaries, those of Agha Pir Ali and Agha Mir Ibrahim. The ruins of the Masjid-i-Akbari, built in A.H. 1239 (A.D. 1823-24) by Haji Akbar, Governor of Lahijan, is also here. A tablet of marble carrying an inscription in verse gives the date of the edifice. The mosque which was in three imposing domes was never completed. The slanderers of the Governor informed the Shah that Ali Akbar was constructing a fort, and the order was given for its destruction.

In Karavanseraibar, in a takieh is the tomb of Agha Sayed Jamaluddin Ashraf, which is held in great veneration.

Lahijan is the centre of the silk trade, and there are several buildings with iron roofs for the drying of cocoons, raised on French and Levantine houses. Most of the streets are paved. The houses of the better classes are made of brick, those of the lower classes of mud. All of them are surrounded by an open space planted with trees, and enclosed by a wall of brick or mud. There are about five hundred shops in the town, and also an Iranian Telegraph Office. The principal industry is the manufacture of silk tissue and silk embroidery. Rose-water and bon-bons of orange flower of Lahijan were formerly well known, some of it having been sent to the women of the harem of Feth Ali Shah.

The scenery is pretty. Behind the Sabz Maidan are low hills and pleasant woods, and beyond these again are the snow-clad mountains of the Elburz range. Between the Sabz Maidan and the woods, known as Shah Nishin, is a lake seven hundred feet long by two hundred feet wide, which serves as a reservoir for irrigation, but is generally dry. In the middle is a small island. A curious legend is related about it. It is said that the King of Lahijan received several Russian strangers, and desiring to show them the power he exercised over the men and the beasts of the kingdom, he ordered his servants, when they heard the croaking of the frogs to command them to be silent and to throw inflated bladders into the water. This was done, and the frogs, taking the bladders for serpents, ceased their croakings through terror at once, that the strangers were made to recognize the all-powerfulness of the sovereign.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM RESHT TO TABRIZ

THE only way by motor is via Kazvin. Outside what was once the Resht Gate of Kazvin, the road goes south-west and is very good for twenty miles till Siahdehan. Siahdehan is a little village at an altitude of 3,942 feet consisting of over two hundred houses. There are two hotels here where accommodation and food can be obtained, and one or two places where petrol can be got for cars.

At Siahdehan the roads divide, the main road continuing to Hamadan and Baghdad, while the Tabriz road branches off to the right. During the time of my visit, the Tabriz road for a part of the way was more or less a *kachha* road, the surface being soft, but a new alignment was being made, and in course of time the road should be a very fine metalled road. The roads through the passes are in very good condition.

From Siahdehan onwards, numerous villages are passed mostly entrenched in square walls with towers at each end. Norvi, the first village in the province of Khamseh, situated at the end of the Kazvin plain, is soon passed. Here the plain narrows down to a breadth of about three miles; seventeen and a half miles from Siahdehan, and about a mile to the left of the road, is the village of Kurwe, surrounded by cultivation, and looking green and picturesque. The whole country is full of verdure. At Kurwe there is a rest-house. A little further on to the left amidst equally picturesque scenery is the village of Shenjabad.

About twenty-six miles from Siahdehan, in a situation equally picturesque and surrounded for a considerable distance by trees, on both banks of the Abhar Rud, is the village of Abhar, with a population of 3,000 souls. On a hill about a mile north of the town are the ruins of an old castle known as the *Caleh Darab* or the *Castle of Darius*. The materials are large mud bricks, mixed up with straw, baked in the sun, of the same type as those seen in Rhey and Babylon. Water and supplies are plentiful. The Abhar Rud flows in a south-easterly direction, and is crossed by a bridge of seven arches, on the new Teheran-Qum road, five miles south of Hassanabad. It then flows south-east and loses itself in the *kavir*¹ south of Teheran. In its lower course it is known as the *Ab-i-Shur* on account of its salty water. The country from Abhar to Sultanieh used to abound in antelopes, partridges and bustards, and was originally the *Shikargarh* or *Hunting Place* of the Shahs of Iran. There is a blue-domed *Imamzadeh* here.

Five miles from Abhar, along the road, is the most picturesque village of *Khurram Darreh* in the bosom of trees and gardens. Population 1,500. Here there are several running streams with wonderfully fine water. The village is situated in a valley through which runs a clear and rapid river fertilising the surrounding country. Around the village are fruit gardens and fields. The village contains a rest-house.

The next village is *Yousufabad*, where the roads divide, the main *Zinjan-Tabriz* road going to the right, while a branch road goes on to *Sultanieh*. The tomb of *Sultan Khudabanda* is visible from far away. The road to *Sultanieh* is a passable motor road. One or two nasty nullahs near fields have to be crossed, which are sometimes impassable. From *Sultanieh* another passable road goes through the fields, and joins the main *Zinjan* road about two miles further on. The traveller should on no account miss seeing *Sultanieh*.

¹ A salt desert.

Sultanieh lies near the southern hills, and spreads itself north and south over the plain to a considerable extent, the new city being built among the ruins of the ancient one. Sultanieh used to be the principal summer residence of the later Iranian Kings, just as Ecbatana used to be the summer residence of the Achæmenian Kings. Three centuries ago, travellers used to expatiate upon its splendid palaces and mosques. War and earthquakes brought about its ruin. Feth Ali Shah, when he found that the Russians were at Turkoman Chai, thought it beneath his dignity to stop in Sultanieh, and abandoned the place altogether. The palace raised with materials from the demolished structures of the ancient city, used to stand on a hill two miles away from the main city with a village close to it. It is now but a shapeless mound, exploited by Jews. Coins and pottery and glazed tiles are found there, the majority of which are carried off to Teheran, the broken ones remaining in Sultanieh to be sold for a few krans to travellers passing by. It is truly a deposed capital of the past. There is a *tappeh*¹ on the south from which a good view of the city can be obtained, and also a good photograph of the tomb.

Towering above the town, and visible from a long distance away is the tomb of Sultan Mohammed Khudabanda, which is supposed to be seven hundred years old. It is an immense structure. A blue-tiled cupola rests on an octagonal base, on each angle of which there used to be a minaret. Two minarets have completely fallen down, and the tiles too have dropped off from the dome and the sides. At each angle was a staircase, and in each of the sides was a door, and there was one wing projecting from the base. The principal gate fronts the east, but is now quite demolished. The great architrave was of moresque work of a dark blue lacquered tile. The arches of the gates were enriched with ornaments in plaster. The dome is perfectly symmetrical. The interior diameter is thirty-five feet and the height from the ground about a hundred feet. In the centre of the floor was a pillar of white marble probably belonging to the tomb of the King, which was said to be immediately in that position below the surface. There were several arches underground which perhaps supported the whole floor. Over each gate is a gallery which extends along the base of the dome, leading into smaller galleries within, and into others also on the exterior of the building. All the cornices of the doors, the segments of the arches, and the various niches were covered with Arabic sentences; in some places, these were surmounted in smaller characters by Cufic inscriptions, either painted in fresco, or raised in plaster. The tomb is now in a sad state of decay. The Iranians say that when the army of Chengiz Khan plundered Sultanieh, they found 600,000 golden creoles.

The tomb stood in the Ark or Citadel of the ancient Sultanieh. Its area was a square and was marked out by a ditch. The exterior surface of the ancient wall was fine, and the stones well fitted together. At the angle of the ditch was the segment of a round tower saying that it was built by Sultan Mohammed Khudabanda. There was a small sculpture of a combat between two horsemen. At the summit of the wall were representations of lions or sphinxes' heads. All this, together with the old wall, have completely disappeared now.

Here too were built mosques without the enclosure of the ditch, and of the same material as the tomb. None of these survive now. The general habit in the East is for a King to destroy the work of his predecessor, and enhance his own name by being a founder himself. Each successive sovereign is anxious to build a great building for himself which is abandoned after his death. The same thing happens in private life. Every son is unwilling to repair and inhabit the house of his father, and is eager to impose his own

¹ A mound.

name on some new building. This partly accounts for the enormous number of ruined houses seen in Iranian cities.

Leaving Sultanieh, the tappeh, where was supposed to be the pleasure house of the Shah, is seen about one and a half miles to the north, the Jews busy with their excavations. The road joins the Zinjan road. Proceeding on the way to Tabriz, the small well-built village of Dehsis is passed. Here cars are stopped, and permits to proceed to Azerbaijan are examined. The vegetation all over the country is very rich. Soon after leaving Dehsis, the blue-domed Imamzadehs of Zinjan are visible in the distance situated in the middle of trees and gardens.

Zinjan is the capital of the province of Khamseh, and has a population of about 30,000 inhabitants. Originally it was given by Feth Ali Shah as a gift to the Nasakchi Bashi, Ferajoula Khan. The Mahale paid no revenue, but furnished the King with 5,000 horsemen complete, who were paid, fed and clothed from its own produce. Later on it became the stronghold of the Babi sect, and after the execution of the Bab at Tabriz, in 1850, a great massacre of his adherents took place here. The town was taken and destroyed by the Shah's troops.

Situated on the right bank of the Zinjaneh Rud, and built on high ground, there are immense enclosed gardens, full of every species of trees. There is plenty of vegetation. The town is shut in by high hills to the east between which lies a plain six miles long watered by the Zinjaneh Rud, with gardens on both banks. A canal runs through the town.

There are a few masonry houses in Zinjan, but most of them are made of unbaked bricks and surrounded by walls. The streets are narrow and cobble-stoned in parts. In the centre of the town is a big open square, and to the west are the bazaars, vaulted, well-ventilated and clean. The bazaars are vast, and all sorts of goods are imported from Russia. With a little bit of tact, Sassanian, Parthian and Greek coins can be obtained in plenty for a few krans only, for the bazaars have not been exploited by travellers. The greatest mistake is to go into the bazaars by oneself, for prices go up the moment it is found out that you are a stranger. At the time of my visit, one of the Jews had a Sassanian seal for sale, but wanted two hundred tomans for it! Good and skilful workmen are to be found in the town which is well-known for its filigree work on silver and gold, the articles being sold by the miscal.¹

There is a telegraph station of the Indo-European Company in Zinjan. The residence of the Governor is in the centre of the city, and is enclosed by high walls.

There are about seventeen caravanserais, and twelve hammans in the city, but latterly two new garages have sprung up on the main motor road with accommodation for travellers. Food is brought from a neighbouring kava khaneh. The garages are very comfortable, but the sanitation is rather bad.

From Kazvin to Zinjan is 101 miles.

From Zinjan onwards, the road winds along the right bank of the Zinjaneh Rud. The whole country is intersected at regular distances by valleys and the region is very fertile. The small village of Yangi Jeh is

¹ Miscal=24 grains.

passed, and about eighteen miles from Zinjan is the village of Nikpai, where there is a post-house and caravanserai. It has a population of five hundred. After another hour's drive, the small village of Tazeh Kand is passed, a village of about fifteen houses, and a post-house for the road guard. Food can be obtained here from a kava khaneh and eggs and milk can be got in plenty. The kava khaneh has a very nice and clean bala khaneh on top where one can spend the night. In each room of the bala khaneh are Russian stoves. The cold here is intense even in the late autumn, and one notices the difference going down to Mianeh, where it is definitely warmer. It is better to spend the night here than go to Jamalabad, or even to Mianeh. The place is much healthier than Mianeh, and the caravanserai at Jamalabad is not in good order.

About fifteen miles from Tazeh Kand and fifty-six miles from Zinjan is the little ruined village of Jamalabad, elevation 3,916 feet. The road is bad, but a new alignment was being made. There was once a very fine caravanserai here with a bala khaneh, but it is now in ruins. The telegraph office that used to be here has been transferred to Mianeh.

After leaving Jamalabad, the Kizzil Ozzun (the Red Long River) is crossed by an ancient bridge with six arches. This bridge is the boundary of Azerbaijan. The Kizzil Ozzun River, the second longest in Iran, runs from west to east. Here, I will stop to give a description of the river. The Kizzil Ozzun is known as the Mardus of the ancients. Its principal branches rise in the mountains of Abbas Beg in Ardelan near Sineh. After running north-east for a hundred miles, and in a direct line for about fifty miles, the river abruptly turns north-north-west and runs between high precipitous banks through the district of Kizil Gachilar, where it receives a tributary on the eastern side. The river then breaks through a terrific chasm in the Anguran Mountains, runs north to Darband, and then turning east passes the village of Kara Butch. Six miles from Karah Butch it receives the Zinjaneh-Rud which arrives from the plain of Sultanieh after passing Sultanieh and Zinjan. The river now turns north in the valley east of Mianeh, and is crossed by the Qafian Kuh Bridge, eight miles south-east of Mianeh. Passing through the gorge in the Qafian Kuh about six miles north-east of Mianeh, it receives the Karangu Chai. The river then forces a passage through the Talash range. After passing through a steep defile, it takes a south-east course through the plain, and runs through a broad valley covered with brushwood. Eight miles above Alvar, it is crossed by a bridge of six arches; one mile below the bridge, the mountains recede, but three miles further on it is again hemmed in by high rocks. About five miles above Alvar it is joined by the Sakaz Chai; two miles below Alvar, the Kabak Chai joins it. Near Manjil it receives its eastern branch, the Shah Rud, which comes from Mazanderan, and here it is crossed by a bridge. Beyond Manjil the river abruptly turns at a right angle on itself, and becomes the Safid Rud, and flows through the Elburz Mountains by deep valleys, forcing its way through the defile at Rubdar and the narrow valley of Rustamabad. Having passed through Gilan, the Safid Rud enters the Caspian Sea, fifty-seven miles east of Resht. The whole course of the river is four hundred and ninety miles from its source. The Kazvin-Resht road goes along its border, and the roar of the river is heard from a distance. The banks are steep, and during the time I was there, a frightened camel fell down, and was precipitated into the valley below. The waters are deep, but near Rubdar the river is less deep, and in the plain of Gilan, the banks are low and swampy. At its mouth the river is broad and deep, and a sturgeon fishery is carried on by the Russians for caviare. It was on the banks of the Safid Rud that Mr. Brown, the traveller, was murdered in 1810. The Safid Rud divides into two branches near Reshtabad, and both branches have to be crossed by a ferry on the road to Lahijan. The Safid Rud is identical with the

Daitya River of Zoroaster, and it was here that a sacrifice was offered on its bank by his patron Vishtaspa.

After crossing the bridge, which is the boundary of Azerbaijan, the road goes along the banks of the Kizzil Ozzun River to the pass in the Qafan Kuh. The old ascent of the pass was very difficult, but the new road has easy gradients, and the ascent is by no means difficult. The pass is sixty-two miles from Zinjan, and is at an elevation of 4,800 feet. The Qafan Kuh is a range of mountains whose stratifications have been thrown together into extraordinary positions. In some places they are perpendicular, in others horizontal. On the south side of the Kizzil Ozzun are mountains entirely composed of chalk, with schistose strata intervening; on the other side are hills of conical forms, apparently of clay, the strata of which are horizontal. "In some places it appears to have been nearly in a state of fusion, as if an immense volume of liquid soil had been set in motion, its sluggish masses, had settled themselves as the impulse might lead them, and in others, as if some powerful engine had broken these masses and left them in unequal fragments."¹

Descending the pass on to the western side, and crossing the Nujun Bridge of twenty-three arches with square stone piers over the Karangu Chai², the town of Mianeh is reached, sixty-eight miles from Zinjan. The bridge over the river is three hundred and forty feet in length, and has rather difficult approaches.

The village of Mianeh, elevation 3,330 feet, is situated in the Garmeh Rud district, and has a population of about 8,000 souls. There is a telegraph station of the Indo-European Company, situated on a hill, and there is an Iranian Post Office. The town has two hotels attached to garages, but it is not advisable to spend the night here especially in the summer. Apart from the heat, Mianeh is famous for the Mianeh bug, otherwise known as the *Argus persicus* or the Gharib-Gaz. The tick is of a dark grey colour with little red spots on its back. Its bite is dangerous to strangers, though the local inhabitants are supposed to be immune. The *Argus persicus* is a well-known carrier of the spirochæta Marchauxi, and the fever arising here is a type of relapsing fever. I was told that the symptoms are fever with rigors, occurring at stated intervals, and lasting for a month, but which is cured by intravenous injections of salvarsan. A spirillum is found in the blood. The fever is occasionally fatal. It is reported that an infantry regiment marching from Tabriz to Teheran in 1891, had a hundred and thirty men laid up in hospital with fever due to the bite of the tick.

From Mianeh to the Shabli Pass, the road is unutterably dreary. High hills and valleys are crossed one after the other, the road going uphill and down dale. Snow-clad mountains in the distance are the only things to relieve the monotony. Twenty-four miles from Mianeh is the village of Turkoman Chai, consisting of about a hundred houses, on the back of a hill, a carpet of green, cultivated in every part. A stream of the same name runs through the village and flows to the south of it into the Shahri Chai. Turkoman Chai is the village where on the 21st February 1828 an infamous treaty was signed between Iran and Russia by Paskievitch, on behalf of the latter, and on the side of Iran, by Abbas Mirza, on behalf of his father Feth Ali Shah. By this treaty, Iran lost Nakhjawan and Erivan, and had to pay an indemnity of three and a half millions sterling. A war of two years' duration was ended.

Twenty miles further on is the village of Gajin where there is a post-house. There are a number of wells concealed here under the high grass.

¹ Morier, "Journey through Persia."

² Note.—The ascent of the Qafan Kuh from the western side commences immediately after crossing the Karangu Chai.

The mountain of Savalan upon which the Iranians say the ark of Noah rested, and which is situated in a range of mountains close to Ardebil, can be seen from here.

Another twenty miles takes the traveller past the village of Haji Agha, and at the foot of the Shabli Pass, twenty miles from Tabriz, is the small village of Yousafabad, elevation, 6,315 feet. Here the road from Ardebil joins the Zinjan-Tabriz road. The ascent of the Shabli Pass (or Gardan-i-Shabli) is next commenced, the summit being reached at 6,875 feet. During the winter, the pass is covered with snow, and the road is very slippery, and difficult of ascent. The gradient is very steep, and the descent equally precipitous with hair-pin bends. It is a chaussic road. From the top of the pass, the Sehend Dagh (11,000 feet) is clearly visible, and at the foot of the pass on the Tabriz side is seen the remains of an old caravanserai. The right wing and many other parts of the edifice are in ruins but it contains a square area of solid construction, the work of the Sefavi dynasty. The domes have five arches : on each side of the square are rooms, and in the centre of the whole is a large square compartment, divided into a variety of chambers of all descriptions with recesses for horses. All the rooms are made of brick with a strong foundation. Occasionally stone is seen. At the foot of the whole building, at close intervals, are stones cut for tying up cattle.

About two and a half miles from the caravanserai is the village of Saidabad, with a mud fort and low houses with arched roofs. From Saidabad to Tabriz is a run of fourteen miles, north-west. A little stream with clear water is crossed with plenty of poplar trees in the neighbourhood, and about three miles from Tabriz, the road is intersected with hills of a sandy and stony soil.

At the outskirts of the town, near what was once the old Teheran Gate, passes are inspected.

Before giving a description of Tabriz, it will perhaps be just as well to say a few words about the Sehend Dagh. It is about 11,500 feet high, and situated twenty miles south-south-east of Tabriz. Its snow-capped peak can be seen for miles. About half-way up its slope is a thick bed of volcanic ash, and here the shepherds have dug caves for their flocks at night, and during stormy weather. Near its summit are large quantities of porphyry, from which the ancient tombstones near Tabriz were made. In this volcanic region, towards the north-east of the range is a hot spring with an ancient bath said to be the work of Shah Abbas. The water is impregnated with iron. On the southern side at the foot of the mountain are found large fossils of Mesozoic and Cainozoic times. Ammonites, and parts of the *Palæotherium magnum* are also found. The bones of the *Palæotherium magnum* were found on the southern side of the mountain, and the toes of the reptile were found west of Tabriz in a chalky formation. The foot of the mountain on the south side is Triassic, while higher up it is Jurassic, and on the north side, it is Tertiary Cretaceous.

Near the foot of the mountain, on the south-western side near Urumieh is an alabaster quarry.

Sehend Dagh, apart from its geological interest, has a great religious interest for the Zoroastrian. It is identified with Mount Asnavand of the Avesta, where Zoroaster beheld a vision of heaven, and conversed with the Archangel Haurvatat (Khordad), the guardian angel that presides over water.

In Mount Sehend, there is a cavernous vault which is said to be Zoroaster's cave, where Zoroaster retired from the world when he came of age, and lived for some years upon a remote mountain, in the silence of the forest or taking shelter in a lonely cave.



TABRIZ—GENERAL VIEW FROM THE ARK.



SASSANIAN BAS-RELIEF AT SURAT DAGH.

From Jackson's "Persia, Past and Present."

CHAPTER XVIII

TABRIZ—*Elevation 4,423 feet*

SITUATED on the banks of the Aji Chai, at the extremity of an elevated plain which is bounded on the south-west by Lake Urumieh, and on the southern side by the snow-capped Sehend Dagh, is Tabriz, the second largest city of Iran, and the capital of Azerbaijan. It is equidistant from Teheran, Erzerum, and Tiflis and it was the largest commercial emporium in Iran. Tabriz is said by some to be derived from "tab" (fever) and "riz" (flying), i.e., "fever-expelling." The story goes that Zobeida, the wife of Haroum-al-Raschid, having been cured here of a fever, called it Tabriz. Others say that it is derived from Tab "warm," and Rez "to flow," so called from the hot springs in the neighbourhood. Tabriz was the classical Tauris, and about A.D. 297, was the capital of the Armenian King Tiridates III. Its predecessor was Gaza or Ganzaca, the Kandsag of Armenian history located by Rawlinson at the Takht-i-Suleiman. In A.D. 791 Zobeida rebuilt and beautified the city, but in A.D. 858, in the reign of the tenth Abbaside Caliph, Mutawakkil, the city was almost destroyed by an earthquake. In A.D. 1041, another earthquake destroyed the city, and only those escaped who had listened to the word of Abu Tahir, the Shiraz astronomer, who was then at Tabriz, and predicted the calamity. In 1392, Timur sacked and took Tabriz, and its prince, Sultan Ahmed Ilkhani, fled for his life, but within twelve to thirteen years, it had so wonderfully recovered that Clavijo, the Spaniard, who was there, said that its population was about 200,000, and it possessed "the finest baths in the whole world." In the fifteenth century, Tabriz was ruled by the Kurdish dynasty of the Kara Koyunlu or the Black Sheep family, and Qara Youssef, the second sovereign of that family, died at Ojan, thirty-five miles south-east of Tabriz, in 1420. In 1468 Uzun Hassan, the chief of the Ak Koyunlu or White Sheep dynasty, expelled the Black Sheep dynasty, and ruled over Tabriz. The city was then supposed to be without walls, and twenty-four miles in circumference.

In 1500 Shah Ismail, the first of the Sefavi Kings, took Tabriz from the Turkomans, but in 1522, Suleiman the Magnificent of Constantinople, expelled Shah Tahmasp, and made himself master of Tabriz. Shah Tahmasp then made Kazvin his capital. It was soon abandoned by the Turks, but recovered in 1584, by Murad Bin Salim. In 1618 Shah Abbas the Great, after his sanguinary victory at Shabli, wrested Tabriz from the Turks. In this battle, the Pashas of Van and Erzerum and the flower of the Turkish army fell. In 1721 Tabriz was again destroyed by an earthquake, and at the same time the Pasha of Van, with 4,000 men, gained an entrance into the city, but after a desperate struggle were put to the sword, but the town was surrendered in 1725 to the Turks, only to be retaken and reoccupied by Nadir Shah in 1730, and then it remained in the hands of the Iranians for nearly a hundred years, till the Russians under Paskievitch occupied it in 1827. An unpopular Kajar man, Ali Yar Khan, had been appointed Governor of Azerbaijan. He was seized and delivered up to the Russians, who seized the citadel and pointed guns upon the town and disarmed the people. The *St. Petersburg Gazette* of the time stated that the garrison made a most obstinate defence, but that nothing could stop the Imperial troops who carried everything before them, took numerous standards of colours and finally secured the keys of the city from the Governor. To suit the occasion, the colours were specially manufactured in the bazaar at Tabriz, and then artificially perforated with bullet holes, and sent to Moscow, and enshrined in great state in the Kremlin. Although there were only eight gates to the city, fifteen huge keys were manufactured, and sent off to the

Kremlin at Moscow. By the treaty at Turkoman Chai, in February 1828, Tabriz was given up to the Iranians. Tabriz since 1805 had been the capital of the Vali Ahd or the Heir-Apparent, chosen for that purpose by Feth Ali Shah.

In 1850, the Bab was executed at Tabriz, and massacres of his adherents followed in Zinjan soon after.

In June 1908 the revolution against the Shah started at Tabriz, and there was a stubborn resistance on the part of the royalists, but on the arrival of Russian troops in April 1909, there was an end to the fighting, and marked the commencement of a Russian occupation of Azerbaijan. In July 1911 the standard of revolt was raised in Azerbaijan by Shuja-ud-Dowleh on behalf of the ex-Shah. He threatened Tabriz, and gained a small victory. In December of the same year the people of Tabriz, annoyed at the presence of Russian troops, suddenly attacked them and inflicted heavy losses on them. The Russians retaliated by hanging numerous "Fidais," and carried out the execution on the holiest day of the Moharram, causing widespread disgust among the people. They not only bombarded the Ark, damaging it considerably, but took over the administration of Tabriz, made Shuja-ud-Dowleh Governor-General, who ruled the place at the dictation of the Russian Consul-General. In August 1912 the Russians had withdrawn their opposition, and Sipahdar took over from Shuja-ud-Dowleh, the agitation against the Government having waned. Under the present regime, Tabriz has improved considerably.

The sights of Tabriz are not many. There is one main street running north and south known as the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi, a very fine boulevard where all the *elite* of Tabriz go for their evening promenade. The street is one and a half miles long, was built and financed by an American, the Mullahs raising considerable objection at first. Situated in a side street from the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi is the Blue Mosque, so called from the enamelled faience with which it was once encrusted. It was built by Jehan Shah, the last King of the Black Sheep dynasty (A.D. 1437-1468). Earthquakes have shattered its walls, and its dome has fallen in. The front part of the mosque is now being used as a school, and in the courtyard behind are a few graves, covered by the famous Tabriz marble.

In the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi itself is the Ark or Citadel, for which an entrance fee of two krans¹ is charged. The Ark was originally built by Ali Khan, and contained a magnificent mosque within its walls. Abbas Mirza, the second son and Heir-Apparent of Feth Ali Shah, converted it into an arsenal. He employed numerous carpenters and wheelwrights with European tools, superintended by a European mechanic.

Many of the prisoners taken from the Russians were confined in the Ark. Some years ago twenty to thirty Armenian husbandmen, reduced to a state of starvation owing to the raids made upon their fields by the Iranian cavalry, resolved to migrate into the country of Abbas Mirza. On their way, they were met by a party of feudatory Iranian horsemen, who seized them as prisoners without listening to their tale, sent them to Tabriz, where they were thrown, bound and fettered, into a dungeon. During the day-time they were let out to work upon buildings which were being erected without the town, and at night they were confined again in the dungeon.

Here in 1850, the prophet Bab, who preached a new religion and nearly succeeded in driving the Kajar dynasty from the throne, was shot dead

¹ A kran=four annas.

within its walls. The Ark is a solid mass of masonry a hundred and twenty feet high, and with walls twenty-five feet thick at the base. Faithless women used to be hurled down from its summit, but this was abandoned when one woman was condemned to be thrown from the top of the fortress and no sooner was she thrown from the top than her inflated petticoat, acting as a parachute, kept her floating in the air, and she was gently deposited in the garden of a neighbouring house. The Ark is in ruins now.

The view from the top of the Ark is magnificent and should not be missed. Immediately in front of it are public gardens, and the city extends in a wide circle round the fort. In the distance to the south is the snow-covered Schend Dagh, and to the north-east is a wall of rocks: to the west is a wide well-cultivated plain.

About half-way down the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi on the same side as the Ark, a road branches off to the Armenian quarter, wherein is the Hotel Iqbal, a not very clean place. In the same quarter are two shops, one of a tombstone maker, from whom can be purchased bits of the famous Tabriz marble in an unpolished state, the marble being only used now for mosques and tombs; the other shop is that of a silversmith, who does antimony engraving in silver, only made to order, the silver article to be supplied by the traveller. The old enamelled work on silver has completely disappeared. Situated in the Armenian quarter is the British Consulate, and the French Consulate-General. The rest of the streets are narrow, and cobbled and dirty. On the outskirts of the city in the same direction is a tanning factory. On the other side of the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi are the bazaars.

The bazaars of Tabriz are completely vaulted, and are a perfect maze. Chiefly Russian goods are sold here. Occasionally Sassanian and Roman coins are seen in the bazaars for sale, and are very cheap.

Close to the bazaars is a big square in which is the villa that was used for the Heir-Apparent. It is approached through extensive courtyards, and is situated in the midst of a large garden, with an artificial pond in front of it. The halls were decorated in Iranian style. Not far from it, is the place of the Governor-General or Wali of Azerbaijan. The old chappar khaneh can still be seen, but it is the Nazmich's office nowadays.

The population of Tabriz is about 200,000, and it is also the residence of an Armenian bishop. Two or three mosques are of interest: the Sabl Amir, whose interior is decorated with coloured tiles, and whose minarets are in a fine state of preservation: the Masjid-i-Hassan Padshah, and the Masjid-i-Sayed Hamza, situated in the crowded parts of the city. The Ainul Zeinul is a mosque built about a hundred years ago on the top of a hill to the east of Tabriz. The ascent is difficult, but an excellent view can be got from there.

Tabriz has two fine caravanserais. The one was constructed by Haji Sayed Husain, merchant, and another by his son-in-law Haji Sheikh Kasim. Another one is known as Fateh Ali Beg caravanserai which is inhabited by Georgian merchants, and is also called the Georgian Serai.

There are no public buildings of any distinction in the city, and the bulk of the houses of Tabriz are of one storey only, built round courts into which all the windows look. In Morier's time (A.D. 1812) the houses of Tabriz had flat roofs, where people used to sleep during the summer time. The flat roofs are done away with now. The appearance of a labyrinth of narrow and unpaved lanes, often intersected by gutters, and varied only

by the arched gateways of houses, the houses with one storey, and without decent windows (except in the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi, where there are European shops, and big motor garages), the inelegant domes, and no decent minarets, gives the traveller a mean opinion of the city. Yet, the city is beautifully situated, and is like an oasis in a great mountainous wilderness. There are cultivations all round towards the south; suburbs, and gardens extend some miles round the city, and produce almonds, apricots, pears, peaches and other fruit. Near the town, and along the foot of the hills, there are several gardens and flourishing villages, and the land is fertile and irrigated by rivulets. The greater part of the plain, however, is barren, as the waters of Aji Su are unfortunately salt, and valueless for purposes of irrigation.

To the south of the city is the railway station, from where the train runs to Julfa to the Russian border. This and the Teheran Railway to Shah Abdul Azim were the only two railways in Iran till 1929. Railways are now being built in Iran, and already one section from Khor Musa to Dizful is complete.

On the Aji Chai plain, about three miles from the town under a line of red hills, is a race-course, patronised by Europeans and Iranians.

Tabriz is the seat of the Belgian, Turkish, Russian and French Consulate-Generals, and of a British Consulate. It is also the headquarters of the Western Army, and the Amir-i-Lashkir lives here. There is a Governor-General of Azerbaijan who lives in Tabriz. The language of Azerbaijan is Turki and not Iranian. In this province are not only Turkish subjects of the Shah, but Kurds and Christians as well.

Azerbaijan, from Azer, fire and baijan keeper, testifies to the ancient predominance of the fire-worshippers in this part of Iran. It is identical with the Atropatene of the classical authors, and was one of the constituent parts of Media, the other being Media Magna, which corresponds with the two provinces of Ardelan and Iraq Ajemi. Media Atropatene or Azerbaijan extends from the Kizzil Ozzun River¹ before it gets to the gorge in the Qaflian Kuh, to the Araxes or Aras River on the north near Julfa. To the south, it is bounded by the Kurdistan Mountains, which unite further south with the Zagros range.

The climate of Azerbaijan is excessively hot in summer, but excessively cold in winter. Snow starts about the middle of November as a rule, and for several months the roads are snow-bound. The winter begins early, lasts late, and many people are frozen to death in the passes. At Tabriz, the thermometer seldom rises above zero, and it has been said that ink freezes in the inkstands and water in the tumblers, even when a fire is kept burning in the room. Spring and autumn are delightful seasons, especially the latter with beautiful autumn tints on the trees. In the spring, the rivers are swollen on account of the melting snows, and travelling is slightly difficult.

¹ See illustration on page 80.

CHAPTER XIX

FROM TABRIZ TO URUMIEH

THERE are three ways of getting to Urumieh from Tabriz. The first is to go from Tabriz to Julfa, and then down to Khoi and Dilman. It is a good motor road all the way, but the distance is considerably longer than by the third route. There is very little to see in Julfa. The second route is via Marand and Khoi. It is also a good road, and from Marand, the conical peak of Mount Ararat where Noah's ark is supposed to have rested, can be clearly seen. The third route, the most picturesque of the lot, is via Sufian, Sharif Khana and Tesuj, along the northern bank of the lake, with the mountains on the right, and the lake on the left. The road is good as far as Sharif Khana, but from there to Tesuj and Dilman is a track over sodden ground. It is a fair-weather road, and should not be attempted after rain or snow, but the scenery is extremely pretty. A good view is obtained of the lake and the island of Shahi, and of the Sehend Dagh. The Sehend Dagh should be most interesting to Zoroastrians, for it may possibly be the Mount Asnavand of the Avesta, on which Zoroaster beheld a vision of heaven, and conversed with Haurvatat (Khordad), the guardian angel that presides over waters. I shall describe this last route, and mention the other two by the way.

Winding through a maze of narrow unpaved streets for four miles on a bearing nearly north, the traveller reaches what was once the Julfa Gate, where permits to visit Azerbaijan (which should be taken beforehand from the Governor-General), are examined. The road then goes over the excellent bridge spanning the Aji Chai (the river eventually falls into the lake of Urumieh). A few yards after crossing the bridge, the road divides into three branches. The road on the right leads to Kara Dagh, and towards the hill Baba Baghi, which is situated to the east of the city, and also to the Koh-i-Bahalul which is to the north-west of Tabriz, and abounds in every kind of game including antelope. This is the "shikar road." The road on the left leads to the lake of Urumieh but is a mere track and should not be taken. The middle road is the main Julfa motor road, and runs for a part of the way parallel to the railway track. Going along this road we find the plain well cultivated, the villages being surrounded with cultivations, intersected by dykes and kanats. The greatest part of the plain is of a soil strongly impregnated with salt, and the plain extends far to the west and south. To the north and east, the plain is bounded by hard-featured lands of an inferior elevation.

Twenty-four miles from Tabriz, on the main motor road is the village of Sofian, a small village surrounded by a few gardens situated at the intersection of the bases of two mountains, which form one of the most conspicuous features in the lands around the plain of Tabriz. Near it is a long grove of Sinjid trees. A road now turns to the left, and the Julfa road is left behind. Following the turning, the village of Sharif Khana is passed, and Shebester is reached. The latter is a large town surrounded by several villages, and by wood and cultivation. Streams of running water meander in every direction amid the numerous willows, poplars, and other trees which border the road; and there are beds of rice in the neighbourhood, and dykes are often opened to let the water in. The greater part of the country is covered with verdure.

After quitting Shebester, the road goes up a hill, and a full view of the lake of Urumieh can be obtained. The lake is seen to extend north-west

and south-east and its western extremities are terminated by a stupendous chain of mountains.

The road now gets into a mere track, and passes through cultivated territory intersected by small streams that flow into the lake. Several small villages are passed, and then the village of Tesuj is reached, fifty-four miles north-west of Tabriz. The village is hidden in walled gardens. The houses are well built, and the village seems prosperous. There are remains of domed bazaars and a mosque, and though visited by earthquakes, and having a number of ruins near it, the village does not seem to be affected by them. Close to Tesuj is a small custom-house. Steamers ply between Tesuj and Urumieh twice a week in fair weather, taking nine hours for a single journey. From Tesuj to Dilman the road is entirely a fair-weather road. From Tabriz to Dilman via Tesuj is ninety-five miles. But before giving a description of Dilman where all three roads meet, I shall now try and give a short description of the other roads.

Instead of branching off at Sofian, we continue on the Julfa road, and traverse a narrow valley, and come to the chaman of yam in which stands a ruined caravanserai, supposed to have been built by Shah Abbas the Great. This chaman, bounded on one side by a high mountain, on the other by green hills intermingled with projections of rock, was once the favourite summer resort of Abbas Mirza, son of Feth Ali Shah. From there, the road turns to the right into the plain of Marand, covered with villages and richly cultivated.

Marand is a small straggling village of about 3,000 houses and the seat of a Governor in the district. The village lies in a valley, surrounded by desolate hills. It boasts of great antiquity, and legend says that Noah's wife is buried here, and a corner in a mosque is pointed out as the place. Its fanciful derivation is "Mair-and," i.e., "the mother is there." The town was once the capital of the Sassanian canton of Vaspurakhan. Later on it was the birthplace of a number of Mahomedan teachers. In Yakut's day, seven centuries ago, the town was in ruins on account of the ravages of the Turkish tribes who destroyed the town and carried away the inhabitants. In December 1911, Marand was occupied by the Russians when they made an advance to Tabriz.

Marand has a very large building which has several domes, and each separate dome rests upon square pilasters of immense magnitude, which was probably an Armenian place of worship. There is a fine bazaar, and the neighbourhood grows a large amount of fruit which is exported to Russia; also of gums, carpets, wool and honey. At Marand there are the remains of an ash hillock which goes back to Zoroastrian days. These ash hillocks will be described in the chapter on Urumieh. Between Marand and Khoi are deposits of rock-salt.

From the hills round Marand, Mount Ararat can be seen, 16,916 feet high. The Armenians call it Masis, and the Avesta mentions Ararat under the name of Mazishvant. The Iranians call it the Kuh-i-Nuh or Noah's Mountain. At the foot of Ararat is Erivan, the capital of Russian Armenia.

Leaving Marand behind, the road goes on to Khoshk Serai, situated on the termination of a slope of mountains, and overlooked by a remarkable rock of a conical shape, called the Ketch Calehsi or the Mountain of Goats, because it is said that none but goats can climb it.

Zenjireh is next passed, a little village situated amongst rocky highlands of a picturesque form. From here Ararat is clearly visible.

Fourteen miles from Khoi, and two miles south of the road, amongst hills of clay and gravel, is the village of Valdian. This part of the country abounds in wild-hog. A gradual descent now follows into the vale of Khoi, rich in cultivation, water and pasture. The valley produces great quantities of corn, cotton and rice.

The town of Khoi is ninety-one miles from Tabriz, and is surrounded by a wall, a quadrilateral with faces about 1,200 yards in length, with connecting work between them. The parapet is loopholed. The town has a population of 60,000, but there are very few people inside the walls. There are five gates to the town, access to which is gained by wooden bridges over the ditches.

The Ark or Citadel is a large enclosure in a pretty garden and contains the arsenal, the arms and stores being kept in godowns for the purpose. The official residences are in the Ark. The bazaars contain Russian goods, and the central bazaar has a vaulted roof. The streets are broad, and shaded with trees. In the town is an Iranian Telegraph Office.

From Khoi to Dilman is a distance of twenty-four miles on an excellent motor road.

The third road goes from Marand to Julfa, and then from Julfa to Khoi. In Julfa itself there is nothing to see. There is a custom-house in the town. It is situated on the Aras River (the ancient Araxes). This river was proverbial for its swift current, which carried away the bridges in the winter time. Virgil called it *pontem indignatus Araxes*, i.e., "the stream intolerant of any span." At the Julfa ferry, the river is fifty yards wide and runs with a strong current. In spring and early summer the stream is enormously swollen with the spring rains, and the melting of the snows, which produce floods and cause damage to the villages along its banks. Hence the difficulty of keeping bridges over the river. At Julfa there is a ferry and from the other bank is the high road to Erivan. The river is now the boundary between Iran and Russia.

All three roads meet in the plain of Salmas at Dilman,¹ a walled city, and one of the largest in the plain, surrounded by gardens. The streets are clean, and there is a stream of clear water running right through the city. The bazaars are poor and ill-supplied. There is an Iranian Telegraph Station here. Four miles to the west are the ruins of an old town. Dilman in modern times is famous as the place where in 1927 the Amir-i-Lashkar, Hussein Agha Khozai, had fifty-six soldiers tied together and blown to bits from a machine-gun. These soldiers had apparently objected to the Army Commander pocketing their pay, had risen in rebellion and killed him.

It is not necessary for the traveller to enter the city, for the roads meet outside. Close to the Khoi gateway was a stone with the face of a lion lying prone on the ground, and another broken bit showing the lion's head by its side. These seemed quite modern, but whether they are used for the same purpose as the lion at Meshed used to be, and the lion at Hamadan is, I am unable to say. In July 1930 the Mejdliiss agreed to the Finance Ministry's proposal to build a new city of a million square metres round Ahrenjam, a town near Salmas, and to call the town Shahpur, after the present Crown Prince. In future there will be no town of Salmas. Experts have declared that the area chosen will not be affected by future earthquakes.

The road from Dilman to Urumieh is a Russian road, and measured in versts.

¹ Now known as Shahpur.

Between Dilman and Kuchi, on the side of a rocky hill called the Surat Daghl¹ (Picture Mountain), is a Sassanian bas-relief. "The sculptures are about a hundred feet above the plain on the face of a somewhat precipitous rock, and are undoubtedly Sassanian in origin as they present all the characteristic features of the bas-reliefs at Tak-i-Bostan, Naksh-i-Rustam, and Naksh-i-Rajab. The group is composed of four figures, two mounted and two standing. The equestrian figures are royal personages, apparently represented in the act of receiving crowns from the two unmounted figures, which look like vassals and almost resemble grooms. The first of the mounted individuals appears to be older than the other and wears a moustache and apparently also a beard: the second is younger and looks almost smooth-faced, but on closer examination this absence of the beard is only apparent, not real, being due to a mutilation of the lower part of the face by some iconoclast. Both figures wear the familiar balloon-shaped head-gear with streamers floating out behind, and a scarf or veil fluttering from below the shoulders. The cloak about the shoulders of each is clasped in an easy manner, the garment of the elder personage being the more elaborate. Each horseman grasps the reins of his steed with the left hand, which rests at the same time upon the hilt of a long, straight sword; while the right hand is extended to receive some proffered gift, which is hidden behind the horses' head in the first case, but looks like a chaplet in the case of the second cavalier. The close-fitting coat or tunic, the baggy trousers flowing in rich drapery from the knees, and more elaborately carved in the case of the elder personage than in that of the younger, together with the heavy caparison of the horses, which includes a massive chain and ball swinging at the left flank, are typical of sculpture of the Sassanian dynasty. The pose of the two horsemen is lifelike and spirited, although the workmanship is imperfect.

The men on foot are represented as bareheaded, and with beards, moustaches and hair bushy at the sides. The face of the left figure is much mutilated, but that of the right is preserved with sufficient clearness to show details, including what seems to be a collar or band about the neck. Both individuals are clad in a simple manner, the upper garment being a tunic-like coat, the lower being huge bulging trousers. There is a double belt about the waist of each, but no sword is noticeable, nor is there any characteristic accoutrement or decoration, but from the forearm of the figure on the right, there hangs a pendant that looks like a circlet suspended by a short band.

The generally accepted identification of the group is that the bas-relief represents Ardashir Papakan, the first Sassanian King, and his son, Sapor, receiving the submission of the Armenians, an event that occurred about A.D. 230, to which period the sculptures approximately belong.²

From Dilman (or Salmas, as it is otherwise called) the road goes south-east and after fifteen versts, the ascent of the Salmas Pass is commenced. The road winds uphill with easy gradients. About half-way up there is a kava khaneh, and just beyond it the road divides. The road which appears to be the continuation of the main road is steep and leads to a blind end; while the road which branches off abruptly to the right leads to the top of the pass. From the top of the pass, at sunset and by moonlight, a most wonderful view of the deep blue lake, and the islands therein can be obtained. After the descent of the pass, numerous small ruined villages are passed, and in fact after dark, except for the barking of dogs, there seems no habitation there. Eighty-two versts from Dilman, the city of Urumieh is reached. About three or four miles before getting into the city the road is lined with trees on either side.

¹ See illustration on page 92.

² Jackson, "Persia, Past and Present," pages 79-81.

CHAPTER XX

URUMIEH ¹

URUMIEH, elevation 4,400 feet, is situated in the alluvial plain of the "Paradise of Iran." It is known as the "City of Zardusht," and is supposed to be the birthplace of the great prophet Zoroaster. Strangely enough, Urumieh is not mentioned in the Avesta or in the Pahlavi texts, but it is generally believed that Zoroaster was born somewhere in Azerbaijan, but that his mother came from Rhey.

Urumieh has had a chequered history in later times. Famine visited the city in 1879. In the following year, Sheikh Obeidulla, the Kurd, who came from a mountain village, south of Van in Turkish Kurdistan, thinking he would establish an independent Kurdistan, and stop the Armenian religion spreading, crossed the border into Iran at the head of several thousand men, while his son seized Savajbulak and advanced upon Maragha, which was evacuated precipitously by the Iranians. At Mianduab, between Savajbulak and Maragha, 3,000 Iranians were massacred. The Kurdish Army, reinforced by local tribes, marched on Mount Sair outside Urumieh, and invested the city for ten days. The town was saved by Dr. Cochrane of the American Mission who was on friendly terms with the Sheikh. An army of 20,000 Iranians under Mohammed Husain Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, was sent to Tabriz. The Sheikh who might easily have marched on Tabriz and taken it, hesitated and was lost. Jealousy broke out in his camp, the movement collapsed, and Obeidulla was arrested and sent to Constantinople in 1881. He escaped after a year, but surrendered again, and was deported to Mecca, where he died in October 1883.

In March 1910 there were Turkish troops in the Urumieh district trying to extend their occupation right up to the district. In 1910 the Kurds robbed and burnt some of the villages at the instigation of the Turks. This induced the Russians to send troops to the district, and since then Russian influence has been very powerful.

A far more serious disaster overtook it during the Great War of 1914-18. Urumieh, and the villages between it, and Dilman were wilfully destroyed by the Turks and Kurds, as an attack against the Christians. Several of these villages have never risen again, and passing through them at night, no sound is heard save the barking of dogs, which shows that there is life within. Urumieh was more fortunate, and better buildings have taken the place of the old ones, including a new American Mission, the old one having been completely destroyed by the Kurds.

The present city of Urumieh is surrounded by a wall, three to four miles in circumference and pierced by seven gateways and strengthened by a moat at the more vulnerable points. The gateways are in good repair, and every gate is approached by an avenue of fruit trees. The streets are wider than in most towns, and have a stream of water running down the middle. Some of the streets are paved with stones. There is no system of drainage in the town. The gardens within the walls are fine, and orchards and vineyards, planes and poplars, testify to the abundance of water. The gardens separate the houses from each other, and every house of any importance has its gardens with rows of chenars and poplars towering above the enclosure. This is the reason why many ruins are not visible in Urumieh, for where there are any, they are generally concealed by the walls and gardens.

¹ Now known as Rezaiyeh.

The bazaar is inferior to that of Tabriz, but is very lively, and there are a variety of goods for sale, and there is excellent carving done on walnut wood, made to order.

There is an Iranian Telegraph Office in the city. The population is between 30,000 and 40,000. It is also the seat of a Russian Consulate-General.

In addition to the antiquities round about the town, Urumieh is the headquarters of the American, British and French Missions.

The American Presbyterian Mission¹ was opened in 1835, and has since spread over various parts of Iran, though their headquarters are still at Urumieh. The college is outside the walls and is an excellent institution where real good education is given to the Assyrian children. There are a chapel, and schools for ordinary and technical instruction, a hospital and a printing press. There is a country residence for the summer upon Mount Sair, five miles from the city. Ever hospitable, ever kind, the American Presbyterian Mission is always willing to put up travellers and to show them the sights of the city and the neighbourhood. I stayed there as the guest of the Rev. Mr. Muller, the head of the Mission, and one cannot speak too highly of the kindness and goodness of the whole Mission.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission is the next in importance. It started definitely in 1884. On account of trouble with the Turks and Iranians, Mr. Riley was commissioned by Archbishop Benson to report upon the situation. At the present day, there is a college for priests and deacons at Urumieh, and a high school for boys and girls.

The French Mission looks after the Roman Catholic Chaldeans.

The American Mission looks after the Assyrians, whose origin is interesting. They were originally known as Nestorians, and are the descendants of the followers of Nestor, Patriarch of Constantinople who was excommunicated and banished by the Third General Council of the Church of Ephesus in A.D. 431, for heretical opinions concerning the incarnation of Christ. They took refuge in Iran, which at that time was at war with Rome, and were received there with open arms. They spread their tenets throughout the East, and established seminaries at Odessa, Nisibis and Baghdad: sent emissaries to Bactria, Tartary, India and China, established twenty-five episcopal sees from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. At the end of the fourteenth century A.D. there was a wholesale slaughter by Timur, and the remnants retired into the mountain fastnesses north of Mesopotamia, descending occasionally to the plains of Mosul, or coming down towards Urumieh. The present descendants claim to be the spiritual descendants of St. Thomas and St. Jude, and call themselves Syrians. Their language is an ancient Syriac dialect, and their religious books are written in Syriac.

Those saved from the slaughter of Timur, resided at El-Kush, north of Mosul, under the leadership of a Patriarch known as Mar Elias; about the middle of the sixteenth century, the Bishop of the Eastern Nestorians living on the Turko-Iranian frontier declared his independence, and founded the Patriarchal line of Mar Shimun, which title has remained in the same family ever since.

In the next century, some of the Mosul Nestorians made their allegiance to the Pope of Rome, who consecrated their Patriarch under the title of Mar Youssef, whose residence was at Diarbekr, and his official diocese that

¹ This Mission has now left Urumieh.

of Babylon. In 1778 the rest of the Western Nestorians also made their allegiance. In 1873 the western branch suffered further disruption owing to a Papal Bull from Rome, and Mar Elias Melus led another schism which repudiated Rome, and now includes many of the chief families in the neighbourhood of Mosul.

The Mar Shimun is taken from the same family, a number of whose male members are kept as candidates for the succession. They should be unmarried men, who have not eaten meat since their birth. When one of their number is chosen, the rest are permitted to eat meat and do what they like. When the Patriarch-designate succeeds he takes the dynastic title of Mar Shimun. It was the Archbishop of Canterbury that suggested turning the name of the Syriac Christians from Nestorians to Assyrians.

Inside the city is the Syriac church of Mart Mariam, in which under a wall are supposed to be buried one or two of the Magi, who were present at the birth of Christ. I reproduce the narrative from the New Testament Apocrypha :—

1. "And it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of Judaea, in the time of Herod the King ; the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zoradascht (Zoroaster), and brought with them offerings : namely gold, frankincense and myrrh, and worshipped him and offered him their gifts. 2. Then the Lady Mary took one of his swaddling clothes in which the infant was wrapped, and gave it to them instead of a blessing, which they received from her as a most noble present. 3. And at the same time there appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had before been their guide in their journey : the light of which they followed till they returned into their own country. 4. On their return, their King and princes came to them inquiring, what they had seen and done ? What sort of journey and return they had ? What company they had on the road ? 5. But they produced the swaddling cloth which St. Mary had given to them, on account whereof they kept a feast. 6. And, having, according to their custom of their country, made a fire they worshipped it. 7. And casting the swaddling cloth into it, the fire took it and kept it. 8. And when the fire was put out, they took forth the swaddling cloth unhurt, as much as if the fire had not touched it. 9. Then they began to kiss it, and put it upon their heads, and their eyes, saying, This is certainly an undoubted truth, and it is really surprising that the fire could not burn it and consume it. 10. Then they took it, and with the greatest respect laid it up, among their treasures."

How particularly interesting it is to note that the wise men came from the East in accordance with a prophecy made by Zoroaster. The priest looking after the church at present, came to the place after seeing a vision. The church is well looked after, is semi-subterranean, and in the ground attached to it are several old graves, and tombstones with Syriac inscriptions, one of them dating back to 1855.

Outside the city walls, in a field about a mile away, is an old tower and mosque of Arab architecture dating about the thirteenth century, with Cufic writing on it, a good bit of which has come off.

For those who have time, a visit can be paid to Mount Sair, from where a full view of the plain of Urumieh can be obtained. The plain is about fifty miles long and eighteen broad—one vast expanse of groves, orchards, gardens and villages, sometimes with a village common. For twelve miles the town is surrounded by gardens, intermingled with tobacco and cotton

fields, and in parts with melon grounds. Truly, it is called "the Paradise of Iran."

Before proceeding to the most important antiquarian interest of Urumieh, I want to mention a legend referred to by Spiegel connecting Zoroaster's name with Urumieh. He says that to the north-east of the city in the mountain of Buzo-Daghi (Calf Mountain), there is a cave in which Zoroaster was supposed to have lived as a hermit.

The most interesting sights of Urumieh and the neighbourhood are the ash-heaps, also called the Zoroastrian ash-heaps,¹ supposed to be the ashes from the Zoroastrian Pyrœa. Missionaries say they are the ashes of Job, for Job went about clothed in sackcloth and ashes. There are about a dozen of these ash-heaps in the neighbourhood of Urumieh, and as many as sixty-four about the lake, most of them being in the plain of Urumieh and the plain of Sulduz to the south, but none in the northern plain of Salmas. The mounds are from sixty to a hundred feet in height, and are composed of immense deposits of ashes mixed with earth.

One of the largest of these is the Dugeila Ash-heap, about a mile from the Arab tower. The heap is three to four hundred yards long, and over a hundred feet in height. But the peasants come and dig there, tunnel the mound, and undermine it, taking away the ashes for the purposes of fertilization and making saltpetre. The mound consists of soft earth or clay, with strata of ashes several feet thick running at different levels. Stone buildings originally were supposed to have stood on the hill, and the present village of Dugeila is built largely from the stones of these. Some time ago, a foundation wall of burnt brick was discovered under the bottom of the hill, brick six inches thick by twenty-four inches long, very much like the bricks at Karku Shah in Seistan, one of the headquarters of the Zoroastrian Pyrœum. Excavations are constantly going on there, and pottery, coins, and terracotta figures are found. Most of the pottery is broken, but occasionally whole vessels have been found. No cylinders or inscribed tablets have yet been found.

Six miles east of Urumieh is the ash-heap of Tarmani, conical in shape. There are large stones on the top, and when excavations were done some years ago, an image of considerable size was found, but destroyed by the Mahomedans. Here too numerous pottery and earthenware vessels are found.

A little to the south-east of Termani is the hill of Almat. Here urns have been found of enormous size, with skeletons of human beings buried in them. Occasionally graves are found with stone slabs covering the place where the body lay.

The largest mound of the four is the one at Geog Tapa (Cerulean Hill), a little to the east-south-east of Urumieh. On top of it is a Christian church. Here amongst the excavations was discovered a carved hollow cylinder in an underground chamber built of stone, and now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Here too, the villagers have been taking away the soil for manure. Earthenware vessels are constantly discovered. Here too are often discovered urn burials, and graves. Here was discovered a stone tomb containing a human skeleton with several copper spikes from four to five inches long driven into its skull. On another mound close to this one was discovered an earthen sarcophagus containing a skeleton with long nails driven into its skull. Whether these are ancient executions or not, cannot be said, but there is a passage in the Vendidad where the

¹ See illustration on page 106.

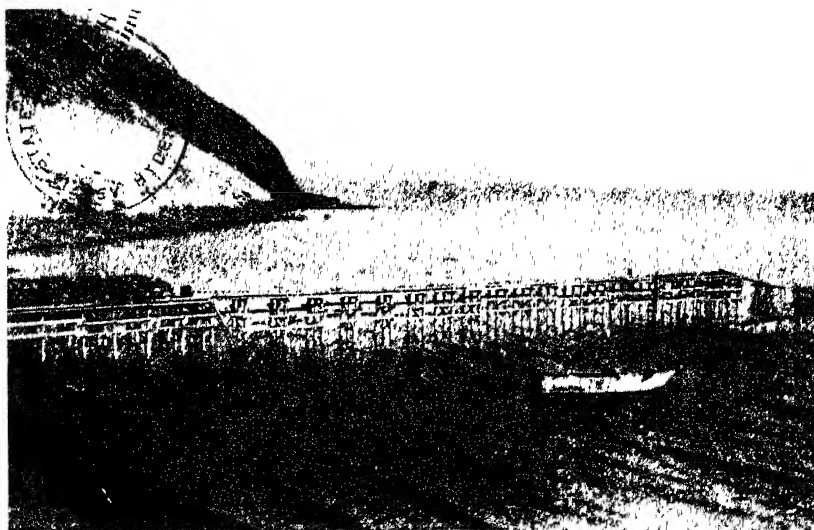
torments of hell are described as being as painful "as if one should nail the bones of his perishable body with iron nails."

Occasionally as many as three or four bodies are found in a single sarcophagus.

As the birthplace of Zoroaster, and for several centuries the sacred city of his followers, and perhaps the scene of the Restoration of the Mithraic rites, Urumieh must for ever remain interesting. It is a great pity that the present Ruler of Iran has changed this time-honoured name of Urumieh into the modern Rezaiyeh, naming it after himself. It would have been better if he had altered the name of another town instead.



ZOROASTRIAN ASH - HEAP.



THE LAKE OF URUMIEH.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LAKE OF URUMIEH

A VERY pleasant motor drive of twelve miles on a well-made Russian road leads to the Lake of Urumieh. On the road to the lake to the right are the ruins of the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, supposed to be over a thousand years old. On the shores of the lake is a pier jutting out into the sea, where the steamers from Tesuj land their passengers and goods.

Lake Urumieh in the days of the Avesta was known as Chæchasta, and its southern shores have been covered with "reeds and hollows." Other names for it are the Daria-i-Urumieh, the Daria-i-Maragha, and the Daria-i-Shahi (or Royal Sea). It was also known as the Daria-i-Kabud or the Blue Sea. The lake is eighty-four miles long, and twenty to thirty miles broad, has a circumference of two hundred and eighty miles and an elevation of 4,100 feet above the sea. The water is pellucid, and to the eye has a deep blue colour. Indented with bays and inlets, studded with numerous islands, particularly in the southern part, with Mount Sehend rising on its eastern side covered with snow, the lake presents a delightful aspect. The bottom of the lake has been proved to consist of ledges and terraces. Its maximum depth is forty-five feet, but the average depth is about sixteen feet, and swimmers can go two miles from the edge without getting out of their depth. The lake is abnormally salty (22 per cent. of salt) and shallow, and while swimming, the limbs are thrown up to the surface and the head has a tendency to go down, a thick crust of salt being deposited on the body. During a storm, sheets of saline foam are seen over the surface and no sooner has it passed than the waves subside into a death-like sleep. On receding, the salt is left on the shore, in a white efflorescence resembling snow, sometimes several inches thick. The banks are covered with a thick slime and decaying vegetable matter, and this combined with saline efflorescence emits a horrible stench. No fish live in the water, except a species of small jelly-fish which help to feed the wild-fowl that are sometimes seen there.

There was once a causeway from Chawan to Urumieh, the remains of which can still be seen in the shallow parts of the lake. Its antiquity is not known.

The same features which characterize the Caspian Sea and the Dead Sea are seen here. Though several rivers of different sizes enter the lake, yet there is not only no visible increase in the lake itself, but definite signs of diminution which shows that the evaporation is greater than the inflow from the rivers. Like the Dead Sea, it supplies the country with salt of beautiful transparency.

The Jaghetu and the Aji Su are the two principal rivers of the Urumieh basin. The Jaghetu rises from the Zagros Mountains close to the source of the Kizzil Ozzun. After collecting the streams from the hills, it flows first north, and then north-west towards Mianduab, and enters the lake from the south-eastern side. The other stream flowing near Mianduab is a small stream of the Tatavu formed by torrents from the Zagros. They both flow higher than the level of the plain.

The Aji Su flows into the lake from the north-east. It rises from the Savalan Dagh, flows due south, then north-west, and later on south-west, passes through Tabriz, and enters the lake on the north-eastern side.

On its eastern side, the Shahi Peninsula, also known as the Island of Shahi, projects far into its waters and divides it into two portions of unequal sides—a northern and a southern. There are four other islands of the north of different shapes and sizes most of which are uninhabited, and the homes of venomous snakes and reptiles. The Island of Shahi, however, is inhabited, and its inhabitants live to a good old age. Here the Mongol, Hulagu Khan, is buried, and here offenders were sent in exile by Abbas Mirza.

Towards the southern end is a cluster of about sixty islands. The greatest amount of water is probably received by the lake in the spring, when the rivers come down swollen by the melting snows and often overflow their banks.

The high road to Tabriz via Savajbulagh and Maragha goes along the banks of the lake. The road from Urumieh to Savajbulagh is good in parts. The road is a steady ascent over a winding ridge. "The hills are low and strong, and would be absolutely bare but for the *Eryngium Cærulæum*, and the showy spikes of a great yellow mullein, a salt lake which is now a salt incrustation, mimicking ice from which the water has been withdrawn, but with an odour that no ice ever has—the Dead Sea of Urumieh. Dead indeed it looked from that point of view, and dead were its surroundings. It lay a sheet of blue, bluer stretching northwards beyond the limits of vision, and bounded on the east, but very far away, by low blue ranges. On the west are mountains which recede considerably, and descend upon it in low rounded buff slopes or downs, over which the track keeping near the water lies. There was not a green thing, not a bush or house, or flock of sheep, or horseman or foot passenger along the miles of road which were visible from that point. The water lay in the mocking beauty of its brilliant colouring, a sea without a shore, without a boat, without a ripple or flash of foam, lifeless, utterly dead from all time past to all time to come. Now and then there is a shore, a shallow bay or inlet, in which the lake driven by the east wind, evaporates, leaving behind it a glaring crust of salt, beyond which a thick, bubbly, brackish green scum lies on the blue water." This description of the lake, given by Mrs. Bishop in her "Travels in Persia and Kurdistan," holds good at the present day. Yet the very blueness of the "Dead Lake of Urumieh" in a vast brownish expanse, is its beauty.

On the road to Savajbulagh, sixteen miles from Urumieh, the small village of Barbarud is passed, and at mile thirty-five the village of Diza Dole. Between these two villages is a swamp where cars are apt to get stuck. Diza Dole has large houses and orchards, and abundant water, and a few miles from it, the lake water is brought in tanks and evaporated. After a dreary road of several miles where nothing but the sky and the sea and the hills are visible, the village of Hyderabad is passed, at mile forty-seven. The road now leaves the lake, gets into the hills, and is very bad, and in certain places is reduced to a mere track. Several streams are passed, but there are bridges on all the bigger streams. During the rains, the road gets muddy and impassable and full of reedy hollows. After crossing a big stone bridge, the village of Mahmudiyar at mile fifty-nine is passed. The plain now gives way to low rounded hills, without habitants. After descending a hill about two miles from Savajbulagh, the bed of the Sanak River has to be crossed, before entering the town. There is no hotel in Savajbulagh, but a night or two can be passed in a garage. Savajbulagh is seventy-six miles from Urumieh.

CHAPTER XXII

SAVAJBULAGH TO ARDEBIL VIA MARAGHA AND TABRIZ

SAVAJBULAGH, the site of the ancient Shehrivan, situated at an altitude of 4,770 feet on the Sanak River, is the capital of Northern Iran, Kurdistan. It was taken by the Kurds during the Kurdish troubles of 1880. It is reputed to have 1,200 houses. The place is inhabited by Kurds, Jews and Armenians. The river though clear and bright is fouled by many abominations, and by the ceaseless washing of clothes above the town: there are no pure wells, and donkeys keep bringing water from higher up the river. From the hill on the Urumieh road, Savajbulagh looks extremely pretty, with the bright river in the foreground, and above it, irregularly grouped on a rising bank, the facades and terraces of the Governor's palace, and the old Turkish Consulate, and numbers of good dwelling houses with bala khanehs painted blue, pink and red, with lattice windows of dark wood and projecting balconies.

On a nearer view, the town is dirty and filthy. The streets are narrow and cobble-stoned, the bazaars are narrow, dark and busy, full of Russian commodities, leather goods, and ready-made clothing. Interesting war relics were braces made from the riband of the Victory Medal (1914-18). The meat and grain bazaars are capacious and well supplied. Women go about unveiled, and men and women alike wear the Kurdish costume. They are remarkably handsome.

Savajbulak used to be quite an important *entrepot* for furs, a large trade being carried on with Russia. It also does a large business with the Kurdish tribes of the mountains, and the Turkish nomads of the plains. It has twenty small mosques. The Armenians make wine and arrack, and are gold and silver smiths. The one doctor in the town is also an Armenian. There is a permanent garrison kept here in case of emergencies that might arise between Kurds who are Sunnis, and the Iranians who are Shiahs, or between the Kurds and the Christians.

To the south of the town is the graveyard, a veritable "City of Death." Fifty thousand gravestones are said to stand on the reddish grey gravel between the hill and the city wall, unhewn slabs of grey stone. It is said that 300,000 people are buried here. The tombs are continued up to the walls.

Savajbulagh is the seat of a Russian Consulate. There are no hotels but the night can be spent in a dirty garage. The main road from Tabriz to Suleimanieh passes through here.

Near Savajbulagh is a rock known as the Tash Tappeh which is covered with cuneiform inscriptions that have not yet been deciphered.

A very fair motor road leads for twenty-seven miles from Savajbulagh to Mianduab (i.e., between two rivers), elevation 4,200 feet. The town is situated between the Jagat Su and the Tatavu rivers, is very big, and covers a great extent of ground. A wide road shaded by poplars and willow trees runs for a mile from the river into the town, and the town is surrounded by gardens. Melons, opium, castor-seeds, tobacco, cotton, all flourish here. The Mussulmans here are reported to be all Shiahs, no Sunnis being allowed to settle here since the Kurdish attack of 1880, when Sunnis within the city betrayed it into the hands of their co-religionists and 3,000 people were murdered. The town has several mosques, and a good bazaar with a domed

roof. Copper work is done in the town. To the south-west of the town over the Tatavu River, there is a brick bridge of three arches. There is an Iranian Telegraph Office here. There are about 2,000 houses in the town.

Between Mahmedyar, Daralak and Mianduab is the village of Khor Khorah, particularly interesting to Zoroastrians. This was the place of the first convert made by Zoroaster. His name was Medhyo-Mah and he was his own cousin. In the Pahlavi writings of Zatsparam, it is written that the scene of the conversion was "in the forest of reedy hollows, which is the haunt of swine of the wild-boar species." To the south of Urumieh is the "Forest of Reeds," or "the forest of reedy hollows" about sixty miles in extent. In this region also, "the swine of the wild-boar species abounds," and the animals are hunted. Considering that Zoroaster spent his early life near Urumieh, this may probably be the spot where Medhyo-Mah was converted.

Within four hours after leaving Savajbulagh, the most interesting town of Maragha is reached, elevation 4,350 feet. The road from Mianduab to Maragha is very good. The Iranians regard Maragha as one of their most ancient cities, giving Balkh the first place in antiquity, Sultanieh the second, and Maragha the third; but in the history of Jenghiz Khan (Petit de la Croix's translation), it is mentioned that the city was built by the Caliph Merwan, the last of the Ommiades, who flourished about A.H. 127 (A.D. 745). The Mongol Prince, Hulagu Khan, the grandson of Chengiz Khan, after his conquest of Baghdad, and the overthrow of the Abbaside Caliphs, made Maragha his residence; here he drew round him learned men, philosophers and scientists, and here he died in A.D. 1265 and was buried on the Shahi Peninsula.

Maragha, situated on the Safi Chai, is a walled city of 15,000 inhabitants, and situated eighty miles from Tabriz. The town is pleasantly situated in a long narrow valley running nearly north and south at the extremity of a well-cultivated plain opening to Lake Urumieh, from which it is distant about ten miles. The place is surrounded by vineyards and orchards watered by canals from the Safi Chai. The town is encompassed by a high wall partly in ruins, and has five gates. Two bridges of six elliptical arches constructed of red brick, one situated a quarter of a mile lower down than the other, are built over the river which flows close to the walls, on the western side of the town. They were said to have been constructed in the reign of Hulagu Khan in the thirteenth century. Each of these bridges leads to a gate.

The city is everywhere commanded by the hills which surround it. On the east there are sloping hills which gradually verge to high mountains. The Sehend Dagh bears N37E from Maragha, and is the source of the Safi Chai, from which numerous jubes¹ are cut, and its waters distributed throughout surrounding cultivations. On the north-eastern side too is the cemetery in which are many ancient stones with Cufic inscriptions upon some of which are carved bows and arrows, swords and shields indicating a warrior; books and reading boards denoting a Mullah; banners denoting a mason, etc. Upon one stone is the sculpture of a man on horseback, which fact alone serves to distinguish the tomb of a Shiah from that of a Sunni, who looks upon the representation of the human figure as impious. Some of the tombstones date back to the sixteenth century. To the east of the town is the ruin of an old rectangular building, originally pointed out as the tomb of one of Chengiz Khan's descendants, and now shown as the memorial to Hulagu Khan.

¹ Canals.

Inside the town, behind a house close to the market, is the Gumbad-i-Kabud, in which is supposed to be buried one of the wives of Hulagu Khan.

On the western side, Maragha is girt by a low range of flat hills, consisting of horizontal layers of sandstone, covered by pieces of basalt. One of these hills was levelled by the orders of Hulagu Khan to facilitate the building of his famous observatory, which he erected there. It was built by his friend and counsellor, Nasr-ed-din, the greatest astronomer of the age, and here the latter composed his "Tables of Ilkhani." Here Nasr-ed-din with the best astronomers of his day observed the motions of the heavenly bodies. Remains of the observatory are still to be seen. On the southern slope of the observatory hill is a cave cut into the limestone. There are three chambers, each ten feet high, and a passage thirty-eight feet long, which leads into a little chamber above the first three. The walls are about eight inches in thickness. Here, I was told, fossils could be found.

The town of Maragha itself is clean, has a big market square, two or three comfortable garages, and one excellent restaurant to the west of the town, where good food is given at very moderate prices. There is an Iranian Telegraph Station here. Near Maragha is a subterranean chamber said to be Zoroaster's cave.¹

About four miles from Maragha on a bearing of S12W are several mineral springs well worth a visit. They issue from the earth with different degrees of force, close on the borders of a stream flowing near a deserted village called Chai Bagh. Two of these run side by side, one cold, the other tepid. On the opposite side of the river is another, which sometimes gushes out with full force, and at other times comes out in a trickle. Another spring rises from the town, and the water is more copious than all the other springs combined. It issues from the earth in bubbles, and falls into a basin about fifteen feet in diameter. The waters are of a strong chalybeate type, and as soon as they flow out of the basin, they solidify and petrify and leave a copious deposit of carbonate of lime, and the channel is raised up in little rocky ridges varying in height, above the plain. The water is good for cutaneous disorders.

Leaving Maragha the road goes over the Safi Chai Bridge, and comes close to the eastern shore of the Lake of Urumieh, and then runs parallel to it. About twenty miles from Maragha, a new alignment was being made, and when completed will be passable for all arms. Going along the eastern bank of the lake, a few hundred yards to the right of the road, at the entrance of an inconsiderable plain, and six miles from the modern village of Dekharegan are the marble quarries.

Dekharegan is a walled town thirty-six miles south-south-west of Tabriz with very picturesque approaches. It was the scene of a conference between Paskievitch and Abbas Mirza, after the occupation of Tabriz by the Russians, during the war of 1826. The district was then the headquarters of the Iranian cavalry. The best wine which the Armenians of Tabriz make is the produce of the grape of Dekharegan.

The marble pits consist of certain ponds or springs which extend about half a mile in circumference, and are situated close to each other. Their waters concrete and petrify, and produce that beautiful transparent stone commonly called Tabriz marble, which has various colours, the prettiest being a green with a streak of red in it, and which is used in the mosques, and burial-places in Iran, and also in the baths. A good direction to the

¹ Ker "Porter," *Travels* 2, pages 495-497.

ponds is a peak in the adjacent mountains immediately under which they are situated. They bear from the village of Shirameen N30W and are distant about two miles from the border of the lake.

On approaching the spot the ground has a hollow sound, and there is a strong mineral smell from the ponds. The process of marble formation can be traced from the beginning to the end. In one part, the water is clear, in a second, it is more stagnant and thicker, in a third it is black, and in its fourth and last stage is white. The last bit looks like frozen water. In the early parts, so brittle is the coating that if a stone is thrown on it, it breaks the outer coating, and black water exudes from underneath it. When the marble is fully formed, a stone makes no impression upon it, and a man can walk over it without damaging it. Whenever the petrification is cut, it shows the different strata placed one over the other in parallel and horizontal layers. Where the water exudes from the ground in bubbles, the petrifications assume a globular shape, and contain within them portions of the earth through which the water has oozed; a copious deposit of carbonate of lime is left. The substance is brittle, transparent and streaked with green and copper-coloured and red veins, and of a semi-crystalline formation. On account of these deposits, the channels in which the water runs are raised up into little rocky ridges above the plain. The marble is capable of being cut into immense slabs, and takes a good polish, and can be used for pavements in public baths and palaces. No plants except rushes grow in the water.

From Shirameen, an extensive view of the Lake of Urumieh can once more be obtained. On the north it is bounded by mountains, close to which is the town of Dilman. On the north-east is the productive district of Shebester. To the east is the plain of Tabriz, the salt desert, with the hills and valleys of Uzkoh; to the west are the sublime and snowy mountains of Kurdistan, while to the south is Maragha with its extensive tablelands and pastures.

The beautiful valley of Uzkoh is next passed, and then a conical hill, from which the course of the salty Aji Chai is visible through the arid plain in which it flows, from the cultivated grounds around Tabriz to its fall into the lake.

The road now leaves the lake and goes north-east and for the last twenty miles is a track, quite passable for motors in fair weather. One or two swamps have to be avoided. The large village of Serd Road, seen from an eminence about a mile before reaching it, and which occupies the base of a hill upon which are the ruins of a fort, is next passed and Tabriz is reached. I made it a point to mention these last twenty miles, for when I was in Teheran and saw the Officer-in-Charge of the roads, I was told I could never get across from Maragha to Tabriz via Shirameen.

Continuing the journey from Tabriz back to the Shabli Pass, the village of Youssefabad at the other end of the pass is reached, and the road to Ardebil branches to the left, a good motor road all the way.

Ardebil is situated on a plain about equidistant between the Caspian and the extinct volcano of Savalan whose snowy peak rises to a height of 15,791 feet above the sea. The town is of an irregular shape, having at its southern extremity a square fort with four bastions attributed to the French engineers of General Gardane's Embassy. Ancient tombstones composed of oblong blocks of stone have been used in the foundation, many of which have been inserted with their inscriptions outermost.

The town is surrounded by walls, fortified by towers placed at regular intervals, and has five gates. A small river, the Balouk Chai, or the Fishy River, flows close to the walls. It rises in the Savalan Dagh, and joins the Kara Su, which flows into the Aras or Araxes. In a straight line the Caspian is reckoned about thirty miles from Ardebil.

The principal object of curiosity at Ardebil is the mausoleum of Sheikh Sefiuddin, the direct descendant of the seventh Imam, a contemporary of Timur, and founder of the Sefavi family. He lived at Ardebil, and was so much celebrated for his sanctity, that Timur held him in high esteem, and out of regard for him released the prisoners he had made in Asia Minor, whom he had reserved to kill on some extraordinary occasion. He died in 1384. In the fifth generation from him came Shah Ismail (A.D. 1480-1524), the founder of the Sefavi dynasty, who was also buried in Ardebil.

The tombs are in a mosque. The first approach to it is by a gate at the north-western angle of the town which leads into a street. The visitor then passes through a gateway faced with slabs of Tabriz marble, and enters a court filled with tombstones, the tombs of those who thought it an honour to be buried near the Sheikh. The small cupola which covers the mausoleum of the Sheikh has given way in several places. At the entrance of the hall is a silver grating, and after mounting one high step and going to the farthest end of the first large hall is a second silver grating, and a gateway plated with gold wherein is the tomb of the Sheikh covered with costly carpets and shawls.

Close to the tomb of the Sheikh are the tombs of his two sons, who were said to have commenced these different buildings, but which were actually completed and endowed by Shah Abbas the Great. To the left in a small dark room is the tomb of Shah Ismail, over which is suspended a sandalwood case inlaid with ivory, tortoise shells and turquoises, the gift of the Moghul Emperor Humayun to Ismail's son Shah Tahmasp. This Emperor occupied the Mogul Throne in 1530, but being defeated by Sher Shah, he took refuge in Iran at the court of Shah Tahmasp, who recovered his throne for him, which he possessed until the year A.D. 1552.

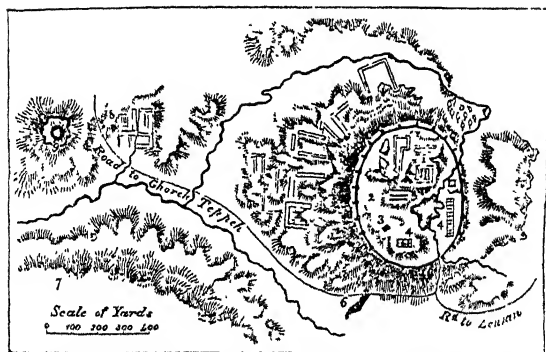
In an adjoining hall, a saloon of large dimensions, is a splendid collection of faience, china vases, bowls, cups of jade and agate, the gift of Shah Abbas, for the daily service of rice amounting to 3,600 lbs., that was issued to the pilgrims. Years ago, there was a collection of old manuscript books and illuminated Korans, also the gift of the same monarch, which were placed in two large closets inserted in the wall. Most of them were stamped with the seal of Shah Abbas, and on the blank page at the beginning of each, it was inscribed that they were left for the use of those who would read them on the spot, but that a curse would fall upon whomsoever should take them from it. There were also a Koran, seven hundred years old, made of the thick silky paper of Khatai, so large and heavy that two men could scarcely lift it, and a book in the Cufic character, containing several chapters of the Koran supposed to have been written by the hand of Ali, seven years after the Hijra. The bulk of these manuscripts and Korans were taken by General Paskievitch for the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg.

During the reign of the Kajars, on the death of Feth Ali Shah, Ardebil was used as a State prison, for those who had rebelled against Mohammed Shah. Here were sent two of the uncles of that sovereign.

Thirty miles to the west of Ardebil is the great Savalan Dagh, 15,791 feet above sea-level. Its base is thirty-seven miles in diameter, and the



HAMADAN AND THE ALWEND RANGE—GENERAL VIEW.



Plan of Takht-i-Suleiman (perhaps the Northern Ecbatana).

mountain is covered with snow nearly all the year round, and snow feeds the streams even in summer, so that there is no lack of water-supply for irrigation. An offshoot from it divides the basin of the Caspian from that of Urumieh. The Iranians say that the ark of Noah rested on Savalan. It is related that in one of the snowy chasms at its summit is to be seen the dead body of a man always frozen, but in the highest state of preservation (with the exception of one tooth and part of the beard), and which is believed to belong to the Paighambar or prophet whose name the mountain bears.¹

To the Zoroastrian, Savalan is a holy mountain. Jackson thinks it to be the "Mount of the two Holy Communicants" in the Avesta, where Zoroaster communed with Ormuzd.² The oriental writers Ibn Haukal, Kazvini (1263), Mirkhond (1474), etc., record the tradition that Zoroaster received a revelation here from Ormuzd, and that he wrote the Avesta here. Another writer (about A.D. 1400) attributes the tremendous snow around Ardebil, near which Mount Savalan rises, to a curse uttered against the people by Zoroaster because they rejected his faith.

¹ Morier, "Journey through Persia."

² Jackson, "Persia, Past and Present."

CHAPTER XXIII

SAVAJBULAGH TO HAMADAN

FROM Savajbulagh occasionally one can get down to Kermanshah, and Hamadan by motor. The road as far as Sakkaz is not always practicable, and is hopelessly bad. I was told by the American Mission people in Urumieh, that if there was no cultivation as in November, Ford cars only can get through to Sakkaz in five hours ; at other times of the year it is impossible.

Sakkaz, elevation 5,075 feet, has a population of about 20,000 Kurds, with very few Iranians and Jews. The people are mostly Sunnis, though there are a few Shiahs. The town is situated on a river, which later on joins the Jagat Su. There was a fine building for the Governor which is now in ruins. There are twelve mosques, three caravanserais and a good bazaar, where there are a few gun-smiths. The American Mission has a small branch here.

From Sakkaz to Sineh is a distance of seventy-five miles on a chaussee road. Winter sets in early, and the passes get covered with snow earlier than they do in other parts of Iran except Azerbaijan.

Sineh or Senna, the capital of Ardelan, is situated in an open cultivated valley, at an elevation of 5,300 feet above the sea. It is so surrounded by hills, and gardens and orchards, that the town is not seen till the traveller is close to the suburbs. It is two hundred miles south-south-east of Tabriz, and nearly equidistant from Kermanshah and Hamadan, being eighty seven miles from the former and eighty from the latter. The town boasts of great antiquity. For centuries it was ruled by almost independent Guran chieftains, of the house of Beni Ardelan, claiming descent from Saladin, and bearing the title of the Wali of Ardelan. Up till 1820, the Wali was independent of Teheran, and ruled his province like a kingdom. In 1860, upon the death of the last male in the direct line, the Shah disinherited the remaining male relatives, and appointed his uncle as Governor.

The Governor's palace and the barracks are situated on an eminence about forty-feet high in the centre of the town.

The bazaars of Sineh are large, the chief industry being carpet making, as the wool is good. Sineh carpets are very much prized. Here, as in the rest of Kurdistan, the women do not veil, and do not wear chakchurs.

The population of Sineh is about 32,000 most of whom are Sunnis, and hate the Shiahs. There are a few hundred Jews and Armenians, and the Christians have large houses, shops, gardens, caravanserais, and a church.

The climate of Sineh is very fine, the valley in which it lies being protected from the severity of the winter by the hills around.

About three hundred yards from the town stands the hill Bidar, from which a fine view of the town can be obtained ; between it and Sineh, is the Bagh-i-Khoshruabad, which is laid out with a lake and a water course and is very pretty.

From Sineh to Hamadan or Kermanshah, the road is quite good.

II

Another alternative too which is not always practicable by car is to go to Mianduab, and then turn south to Hamadan, via Sian Kaleh and Bijar, passing close to the Takht-i-Suleiman.¹ Only one American, I understand, got through that way. Takht-i-Suleiman was supposed by Rawlinson to be the capital of ancient Media, and also the site of the Northern Ecbatana. It is certainly the site of the ancient stronghold of Shiz, where the great temple of Adar Gushasp used to be, which was held in great veneration. It is said that from it were lighted the fires of the Magians, from East to West and the fire had been kept burning for 700 years, without any ashes having been found. Zoroaster too was supposed by some to have come from there. It was in this shrine of Adar Gushasp, according to Firdausi, that 800 years before Christ, the Kainian King Kaikhushru prayed for victory against Afrasiab. It will be remembered that Afrasiab, after his defeat in Turan by Kaikhushru fled to Azerbaijan, took refuge in a cave on a high mountain near Bardah (east or north-east of Urumieh), where he was discovered by a hermit called Hom, and then tried to escape into the waters of Lake Urumieh. His place of concealment was discovered by Kaikhushru, and he was captured and slain, and Kaikhushru went to the temple of Adar Gushasp to give thanks for his success. It was this fire which according to the Bundeish aided Kaikhushru, when he was putting down idol worship near "Lake Chaechest" i.e., (The Lake of Urumieh) :- "When Kaikhushru was engaged in extirpating the idol temple of Lake Chaechest, it (the fire Adar Gushasp), settled upon the mane of his horse, and drove away the darkness and gloom, and made it quite light, so that they might extirpate the idol-temples."

Tabari (840-923) the historian relates that the Sassanian King Bahram Gur (A.D. 417-438), after his victory over the Turkomans in A.D. 420, went to the temple of Adargushasp at Shiz, and deposited his treasures as a thanksgiving, and made the captured queen of the Turkomans a priestess of the shrine. He says :—

"Bahram's route, on returning from that campaign, lay through Azerbaijan. Accordingly he sent to the fire temple in Shiz the rubies and other jewels which were in the crown of the (vanquished) Khakan, and also his own sword, inlaid with pearls and jewels, as well as many other ornaments. The Khatun or wife of the Khakan, he made an attendant in the temple."

Two centuries after Bahram Gur (Bahram V), came the last independent Sassanian monarch Khushru Parviz, who made idols there, which were destroyed by Heraclius, who burned the fire temple, and reduced the city to ashes. George Cedrennus, the Church Father (about A.D. 1100), says :

"The emperor Heraclius took possession of the city of Gazaca, in which was the temple, and the treasures of Croesus, King of Lydia, and the imposture of the burning coals. On entering the city he found the abominable image of Khoshru, an effigy of the King seated under the vaulted roof of the palace, as though in the heavens, and around it, the sun, moon and stars to which he did homage with superstitious awe, as if to gods, and he has represented angels bearing sceptres, and ministering unto him. And the impious man had arranged by cunning devices to have drops falling from above, like rain, and sounds resembling roaring thunder to peal forth. All these things Heraclius consumed with fire, and burned both the Temple of Fire and the entire city."

I have spoken here of the city of Gazaca, otherwise known as Gaza or Ganzaca. In all probability, if not identical with Shiz it was not far from

¹ See illustration on page 114.

Shiz. Rawlinson quoting from Strabo says, "The summer residence of the kings is at Gazaca, situated in a plain, and in a strong fort named Vera, which was besieged by Mark Anthony in his expedition against the Parthians. A short distance to the north-east of Takht-i-Suleiman is a place called Ganjabad, but the identity is a pure conjecture. Rawlinson thinks that Ganzaca is the same as Shiz, i.e., Takht-i-Suleiman.

Of the ruins on the top of the mountain, the Median city has completely disappeared, and only the post-Sassanian city remains. There is an enclosure three-quarters of a mile in circuit, and within it are two walls of stone and brick. The side walls are still standing. Thirty yards to the north-north-east is an arched, vaulted building of brick very much in ruins, and sunk below the ground. One can descend to it, through two arched portals. The bricks are about a foot square, while the walls are four to five feet thick, which was probably the site of the great fire temple of Adar Gushasp.

The other remains consist of a group to the north, and two others on the southern and south-western side.

The geological formation of the mound is extremely curious. It owes its origin to a small lake which is saline, and calcareous to the taste, and whenever the waters overflow, they form a deposit and incrustation. The banks of the lake are encircled by a stony rim formed by the incrustation of the water wherever it overflows. If originally the lake had been level with the ground, it would have formed incrustations round the edge, and in course of time the entire hill may have been formed by an accumulation of these petrifications. The lake is about three hundred paces in circumference, situated to the south of the central part of the mound, and is exquisitely clear, and the colour varies from an emerald green to a deep azure blue. Originally the lake was supposed to be unfathomable, but experiment showed the depth to be one hundred and fifty-six feet. Despite the overflow, the volume of water never seems to diminish, and Rawlinson thinks that the lake is connected by an underground syphon to some other obscure sheet of water in the hills. The water is calcareous to the taste, and has petrifying properties.

The gateway is in a good state of preservation. The height is about forty feet, and the oblong blocks measure two and a half by one and a half feet, and are laid horizontally, with upright stones fitted carefully between them.

Apart from making an attempt to see the Takht-i-Suleiman, this road to Hamadan should not be attempted. The third road to Hamadan, the proper motor road, is via Tabriz and Zinjan to Siahdehan, where the road joins the main road to Baghdad from Teheran and Kazvin. From Siahdehan the road is good, but monotonous. After crossing the Kara Su, a small miserable place called Ab-i-Garm is reached. Here there are hot sulphur springs, and the water of the spring is at a temperature of 98° Fahrenheit. From Ab-i-Garm, the road winds through the mountains to a height of 7,500 feet, and descends to Manian, and then into the plain of Hamadan. Both Hamadan and Mount Alwend¹ can be seen from a distance of several miles, the whole plain being very fertile, and one continued series of fields and orchards.

¹ See illustration on page 114.

CHAPTER XXIV

HAMADAN

“Orchards stretch their bloomy span
Round the walls of Hamadan ;
Purples deepen on the grape,
Lyric brooks make blithe escape,
Yet are all the glories gone,
That the Lord of Macedon
Saw, ere drew the revel on
And the Bacchic orgy ran
Round the walls of Hamadan.”

CLINTON SCOLLARD, “*Round the Walls of Hamadan.*”¹

THE antiquity of Hamadan, if it is the ancient Ecbatana, and most writers are now agreed that it is, dates back to earliest times. In the Iranian inscriptions, it is known as Hagmatna, which means “a place of meeting.” It was then, as it is now, the meeting place of highways from various parts of Iran and Media. In the Babylonian inscriptions it is called Agamatanu. The Sassanians called it Hamatan, and the Greeks “Agbatana” or “Ecbatana.”

An Assyrian inscription of Tiglath Pileser I (1100 B.C.) mentions Hamadan as “Amadana.” Here Semiramis, wife of Ramman Nirari, “built a palace, and bestowed more care and attention upon it, than she had done at any other place” (Ctesias). The same court physician also states that Semiramis on visiting the place, found the city poorly supplied with water, and caused a channel to be dug from a lake on the other side of Mount Orontes (Mt. Alwend) to bring the water into the town. This is the river Alusjird, which flows through the middle of the city to-day. The same author also states that when Sardanapalus, the last Assyrian King, was overthrown by Arbaces, and the Median Kingdom established, Arbaces brought all the gold and silver and booty taken from Nineveh, to Ecbatana.

Herodotus said that the city was founded by Deioeces, the first Median King, about 700 B.C. His description is as follows :—

“Deioeces built the massive and strong-walled city now called Ecbatana, the walls being arranged in circles, the one within the other. The rampart is planned in such a manner that each circle rises higher than the one preceding it by the height merely of the battlements. The nature of the ground, which is a gentle hill, is favourable for carrying out such a design, and as there are seven circles in all, particular care was taken to have the royal palace and the treasury within the innermost circle. The circuit of the outer wall is nearly as large as that of the city of Athens. Of this first circle, the battlements are white, the second black, the third red, the fourth blue, and the fifth orange. The battlements of all the circles are decorated in this manner with colours, but those of the two last are incrustated, the one with silver, and the other with gold. Such were the palace, and the surrounding fortifications which Deioeces built for himself ; but the rest of the people, he ordered to build their houses round about outside the wall.”

The site of the palace is perhaps beneath the citadel known as the **Musallah**.

1 From Jackson, “Persia, Past and Present.”

Here, within the walls of the palace, Cyrus brought the riches of Croesus; and here was found the decree of Cyrus giving orders for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, which was later on carried out by Darius and Artaxerxes. Here too, Darius put to death, the Median Fravarti who had set up a claim to the throne, and led an army against the King. He was defeated at Rhages (the modern Rhey), was taken prisoner and killed. On the Behistun rock is the inscription caused to be put up by Darius :—

“Fravarti was seized and brought to me. I cut off his nose and his ears, and cut out his tongue and put out his eyes. He was kept in chains at my door; all the people saw him. Afterwards I caused him to be crucified; I hanged his principal followers before the fortress at Ecbatana.”

Here after the time of King Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.) was built the temple of Æna, which was probably a temple of Anahita, the goddess of the waters in the Zoroastrian region. The description given by Polybius is as follows :—

“It was originally the royal city of the Medes, and vastly superior to the other cities in wealth and in the splendour of its buildings. It is situated on the skirts of Mount Orontes, and is without walls, though containing an artificially formed citadel fortified to an astonishing strength. Beneath this stands the palace, which it is in some degree difficult to describe in detail, or to pass over in complete silence. To those authors whose aim is to produce astonishment and who are accustomed to deal in exaggeration, and picturesque writing, this city offers the best possible subject, but to those who, like myself, are cautious when approaching descriptions which go beyond ordinary notions, it presents much difficulty and embarrassment. However, as regards size, the palace covers ground the circuit of which is nearly seven stades (four-fifths of a mile in circumference); and by the costliness of the structure in its several parts, it testifies to the wealth of its original builders: for all its woodwork being cedar and cypress, not a single plank was left uncovered; beams and fret-work in the ceilings and columns in the arcades and peristyle were overlaid with plates of silver or gold, while all the tiles were of silver. Most of these had been stripped off during the invasion of Alexander and the Macedonian conquest (335 B.C.) and the rest in the reign of Antigonos (325-301 B.C.) and Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.). However, even at the time of Antiochus’s arrival, the temple of Æna still had its columns covered with gold, and a considerable number of silver tiles had been piled up in it, and some few gold bricks, and a good many silver ones were still remaining. It was from these that the carriage bearing the king’s impress was collected and struck, amounting to little less than 4,000 talents.”

“Here in Ecbatana, Alexander transported the treasures he had obtained from Susa, Persepolis and Pasargadæ. Here too died his favourite Hephæstion, in the middle of rejoicings and drunken orgies. Plutarch says that Alexander’s grief knew no bounds. He caused the unfortunate physician who had attended Hephæstion to be impaled, and forbade the flute and all other music in the camp for a long time.”

“He then ravaged the country, killed a lot of boys and called that ‘a sacrifice to Hephæstion.’”

Ecbatana was the summer residence of the Median and the Achæmenian Kings, while Susa was the winter residence of the Achæmenian Kings, and Persepolis their spring and summer residence. The Parthian dynasty

favoured Ecbatana and Antiochus found an enormous amount of gold and silver bullion to turn into coin, and pay his soldiers.

At about the time of the fall of the Sassanian dynasty after the battle of Nehavend, Hamadan was captured in A.D. 645 by the Arabs, who gained tremendous booty. In the tenth century, Hamadan was stormed by Mardavij Fbn Ziar of Gilan; three centuries later by Tamerlane. In the eighteenth century, Agha Mohammed Shah sacked and pillaged it, and destroyed all the remnants of antiquity he could find. In July 1910 serious disorders occurred at Hamadan, and in 1911-12, Salar-ud-Dowleh, fighting on behalf of the ex-Shah Mohammed Ali, occupied it. Yprin, the Armenian Chief of Police, was killed in 1912 in a fight against the royalists. During the great European War Hamadan was occupied by British and Indian troops, and was evacuated by them in 1921.

Comparing the seven walls of the ancient Ecbatana with the Hamadan of to-day, one cannot but feel disappointed. Though the gold and silver walls have disappeared, gold and silver plaques of the time of Darius are occasionally found. The town is delightfully situated at the foot of the snow-covered Alwend range, at an elevation of 6,250 feet above the sea, and overlooking a plain populous and well cultivated, and bounded on the other side by low gravelly hills. It is a healthy place, with a delightful climate, but dust-storms are frequent in the summer, and winter commences early, and the cold is intense, the roads being blocked with snow. The chief diseases are malaria and eye disorders; small-pox kills children, and very rarely cholera breaks out.

The town itself is extremely dirty, with narrow paved streets, with a stream called the Alusjird running right through the centre of the city spanned by several single arch stone bridges and several wooden ones. The river is swollen by the melting snows in the spring, but is very insignificant in the summer and autumn. There are water-mills on its bank. There are pathways on either side of the stream.

The roads which lead to the inhabited parts wind through a succession of broken walls, yet the houses of the well-to-do, in spite of the high walls, have fine gardens, and are profusely interspersed with trees, and looking at the town from the Musallah an astoundingly pleasing view of the city can be obtained. Trees and flowers, marigolds and roses, marble basins with fountains, and parterres of walnuts, apples and apricots, add to the beauty of the city.

The bazaars are large but shabby, vaulted over and contain about seven hundred shops. The merchants speak of the town as "the store of Iran." The bazaars are well supplied with native produce. The best peaches come from the orchards of Jairud near Qum. One of the chief manufactures of Hamadan is its leather goods. Caravans loaded with hides come over here, for the Hamadani is renowned for dressing and tanning and working hides, and turning them into ornamental articles. Ornamental leather for bookbinding and shoes are made, and skins after being dyed red are used for saddles, and bindings for Khurjins.

In addition to this leather trade, Hamadan is famous for its numdahs or felts and carpets. The felts are used as horse-covering, and as greatcoats by the peasants. The headquarters of the Oriental Carpet Manufactory are also situated here. The felt coats are dark brown, and cost about five tomans, but they protect the wearer from rain and cold. They have sleeves closed at the end to form a glove, with a slit below the elbow, through which

the hand can be protruded and used. They are often worn merely suspended from the neck just like a cloak. The carpet numdahs are a natural brown with a design in coloured threads.

Hamadan is also famous for its copper work, and makes and dyes cotton. The manufacture of ancient coins is done very well and chiefly by the Jews. Gold coins are faked, and so are copper utensils which are especially made with holes in them, and covered with imitation rust, and figures of Zoroaster or Sassanian Kings carved on them. They are extraordinarily good imitations.

On the other hand, genuine Parthian and Sassanian coins and seals can be found in plenty. The Alwend River is said to carry gold in its sand, which is supposed to come from the old coins and buildings on the site of this ancient capital. Gold washing is a regular occupation at Hamadan and coolies can be made to do it for a kran a day. It was only during gold washings that thousands of tiny Parthian coins were discovered in the sand. The amount of gold dust that is found in addition to the coins gives a good profit. The gold washing is done near the Kaleh-i-Kohneh, on the southern side of Hamadan.

The chief products of Hamadan are opium, dried peaches and apricots, raisins, almonds, furs of fox, stone marten, otter, badger, wolf, etc., and sheep skins and goat skins; also gum tragacanth.

The Armenians are the chief makers and sellers of wine, and both red and white wine are made here, and patronised, but the rich prefer arrack to wine.

The estimated population of Hamadan is from 60,000 to 65,000. There is a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran here, near the bazaars, and in the bazaars are over fifty caravanserais and about sixty public baths, but the best place for the European traveller is the Hotel de France, whose charges are moderate. Hamadan is the seat of a British Vice-Consulate, and the Vice-Consul at the time I was there was Mr. A. W. Davis, a man who was extremely interested in archæology, and could read the Iranian cuneiform writing.

The sights of Hamadan are many. Close to the Hotel de France is the tomb of the philosopher and physician, Abu Ali ibn Sena of Bokhara (A.D. 980-1036), known to the West as Avicenna. Though a native of Bokhara, he lived in Iran, and died at Hamadan. He wrote a famous treatise on medicine which came into Europe. His philosophy, too, which was influenced by Aristotle and Neo-Platonism found its way into Europe through the Arabian philosophy of the Moors in Spain, and affected scholastic philosophy. Not only is he renowned as a philosopher and a physician, but he was also a writer of verse. One of his stanzas is paraphrased by Jackson in his book "Persia, Past and Present" (page 166), and I append it below:—

"From Earth's dark centre, unto Saturn's Gate
I've solved all problems of this World's Estate,
From every snare of Plot and Guile set free,
Each Bond resolved—saving alone Death's Fate."

The tomb is made of brickwork, and surrounded by a walled courtyard. An inscription inside the tomb says that the tombs of "His Holiness Sheikh Abu Said, and the Prince of Sages, Bu Ali Sena (Avicenna)," had fallen into ruins, and had been restored by the Princess Nigar Khanum of the royal

line of the Kajar family in the year 1877 (A.H. 1294). There is also a verse from Hafiz on Spring-time and the Divine Love, and thanks are given to God for the restoration of the shrine.

In the same building by the side of Avicenna, is the tomb of his contemporary, Sheikh Abu Said, the Iranian mystic poet, and the author of quatrain verses in allegorical and symbolic style.

The most conspicuous building in Hamadan is the Masjid-i-Jama, a large mosque now falling into decay, and in front of it is a big maidan or square which serves as a market-place.

Close to the Masjid-i-Jama, a little to the south of the centre of the city is an old Jewish cemetery, wherein is situated the sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai. The Jews are its custodians, and the place is held in much veneration by the Jews of Turkey and Iran. The original tomb was demolished by Tamerlane when he sacked Hamadan, but a new building has sprung upon the old site. The tomb is built of brick, with a high pointed cupola from which most of the stucco and blue tiles have fallen off. The entrance is an arch with a very low door, which is made of a single stone turning on pivots, carved from the stone and set in sockets. This leads into the outer chamber in which there are a few tombs of Jews, who have been counted worthy of burial near the shrine.

Entering by a still lower door than the last through which one has to crouch, and then going through a winding passage, the crypt is reached. The walls are discoloured by the smoke from tapers and lamps used to light the pilgrims who visit the shrine. The inner chamber is vaulted, and floored with tiles, and is in good order. Under the dome, which is lighted by clay domes, are the two tombs, each covered by a carved wooden ark of ebony, with a covering of cloth on it. The tombs are of great antiquity. The tomb to the right is that of Mordecai, and the other that of Esther. One is slightly bigger than the other. There is an entrance to the tombs below these arks, and each is lighted by an ever burning lamp. There is nothing else inside, except a Hebrew Old Testament, and some pieces of paper, inscribed with Hebrew characters containing passages from the scriptures, which are affixed by pilgrims to the woodwork.

On the dome is the inscription in Hebrew, the translation of which is the following, "Thursday, fifteenth of the month of Adar, in the year 4474 from the creation of the world, was finished the building of this temple over the graves of Mordecai and Esther by the hands of the good-hearted brothers Elias and Samuel, the sons of the deceased Ismail of Kashan."

The following verses of the Hebrew inscriptions with which the tomb is covered, are taken from the Book of Esther:—

"Now in Shushan, the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shemei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite."

"For Mordecai, the Jew, was next unto King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and great among the Jews, and accepted among the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his brethren, and speaking peace to all Asia." "To all Asia" differs from the Bible, where the last phrase is "speaking peace to all his seed."

Whether Esther and Mordecai are really buried here is a question. The Jews of Hamadan have no tradition of the causes of Esther and her uncle

being buried here. Haman, the Minister of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), persecuted the Jews. Esther went to the King at Susa, and so touched his heart that she caused him to spare her people, and hang her enemy on the very gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai.

The probabilities are that they were removed from Susa, after the death of Xerxes.

In Hamadan was found an edict of Cyrus in favour of the Jews. To Ecbatana, Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 164) came after the outrages he committed at Persepolis, and was smitten here by the disease that brought about his death, as a direct visitation of the curse of God (2 Maccabees 9 : 1-3).

The Purim festival, celebrated on the 13th and 14th of the month of Adar, in commemoration of the slaughter which the Jews made in those days of their enemies, is still kept up : at this festival two pilgrims resort to the tomb from every quarter, and Jews believe that miracles are wrought at the sepulchre, and women are freed from sterility by performing certain rights in the monument.

Outside the shrine are generally a large number of children clamouring for *baksheesh*. The Jews number about 2,000 or more, and are in a state of moral and social degradation. Most of them live by making and selling wine, by selling old coins and seals, by faking antiques, and by peddling in the villages.

Not far from the tomb of Esther and Mordecai, in the north-western part of the city is a ruined building known as the Gumbad-i-Alawiyeh. It is a shrine about six hundred years old, and presumably of Mongol origin. The stucco work in the interior resembles Chinese work, and is artistic in design and execution. These are ornamental Cufic inscriptions from the Koran. Steps lead to an underground room, where the Koran is read in modern times, and no unbeliever is allowed to descend these steps. The place originally was a tomb.

Close to the Gumbad-i-Alawiyeh is the tomb of the derwish poet Baba Tahir Uryan (d. 1019), a native of Hamadan. Excavations have recently been made at the northern angle of the town, and the remains of a big palace have been found. The walls have crumbled down, and there are no signs of pillars, though a few colossal stones, part of the old wall, are still in situ. Bases of columns of the type seen in Persepolis have also been found, and two gold and silver plaques with the names of Darius, and one of them is in the hands of a Jew who wants a million tomans for it. The point now, in view of these excavations, is whether the old palace of Ecbatana is under the Musallah, or whether this is the site of the old city with walls covered with plates of gold, and with fortifications of enormous strength ; whether this is the site of the palace of Deioces, and the capital of Arbaces after the fall of Nineveh ; where Astyages received the infant Cyrus, who was soon to overthrow his kingdom and where the summer residence of the "Great King" used to be. More excavations are required before the question can be definitely settled.

Retracing our steps towards the British Vice-Consulate, and close to it, in the bungalow of the Governor, is a big black square stone, evidently

the pedestal of a statue, or the foot of a column, with inscription in cuneiform writing. I put it down for the benefit of my readers:—

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 𐎠𐎶 < = < 1𐎶 𐎶𐎶 -1𐎶 = < 1𐎶 < 1𐎶 1< -𐎶 1< 1𐎶

which reads "Apadanama Satunaya Athangainama Artakshathra Khsh Vazarka, Shaya Daryava Khsh Puthra Hakhamanaishya," which means:—"Palace with columns of stone—Artaxerxes the great King, son of Darius King, the Achæmenian." It will be noticed that Artaxerxes calls himself the son of Darius, and not of Xerxes.

The excavations to the north of Hamadan can be best judged from the following verses:—

"Gone the great sun-temple where
 Golden stair rose over stair;
 Gone the gilded galleries,
 Porticoes and palaces;
 And the plaintive night winds plead
 For the memory of the Mede,
 Sob for alien ears to heed,
 Pilgrim train and caravan,
 Round the walls of Hamadan."

Outside the modern town on the southern side, is an elevation known as the Musallah, which has been occupied by a citadel. Many writers think that the Musallah is the place where the old palace of Deioces stood, and Polybius the Greek historian talks of "An artificially formed citadel fortified to an astonishing strength. Beneath this, stands the palace, which it is in some degree difficult to describe in detail, or to pass over in complete silence." The ascent of the Musallah is very steep, and the ridge has massive walls, fifteen feet thick and twenty feet high made of clay, stones and bricks, and running north-east and south-west. This Iranian fort was destroyed by Agha Mohammed Shah, who left one large tower to attest its strength. The tower is now in ruins.

Originally also, but present now, on the site of the castle was a small square platform, with an exterior facing of white square stones, backed by masonry of common stone and mortar, called the Takht-i-Ardeshir. It had all the appearance of a Sassanian building, and it may go to prove that in the time of the Sassanians at any rate, this was regarded as an important fortress. Whether the Musallah is the site of the ancient Ecbatana or not, at any rate, an excellent view of the whole extent of Hamadan, and of the snow-clad Alwend range, can be obtained from its summit.

As one leaves the Musallah to see the stone lion, not far from its foot, and close to the main road to Isfahan, one is more than ever convinced of the following verse from the same author:—

"Nought of all the radiant past,
 Nought of all the varied vast
 Life that throbbed and thrilled, remains
 With its pleasures and its pains

Save a couchant lion lone,
 Mute memorial in stone
 Of three empires overthrown—
 Median, Persian, Parthian—
 Round the walls of Hamadan.”

The great lion stone or rather its battered semblance thereof, is one of the landmarks of Hamadan. I was told it was of Parthian origin, but the beast tells no tale, and no excavations have been made anywhere near it. Masudi, a thousand years ago, described it as standing by the Lion Gate, on a low hill overlooking the road to Rei and Khorassan. He says it was carved after Alexander's return from Hamadan, and put up as a talisman to protect the walls of the city and its inhabitants, which would be safe as long as the lion was not thrown down and broken. He says that the overthrow of the lion was effected when the army of Mardavij stormed Hamadan, and this event was accompanied by disaster thus fulfilling the prophecy. Yakut (about A.D. 1220) says that the lion was set up by Belinas as a talisman against famine and cold. Yet famine visited the town some years ago, and the rigours of the severe winters in Hamadan are well known. In modern times, barren women pour oil over it, and leave offerings behind (generally pieces of cloth tied by a string), hoping that the lion might be able to grant them their heart's desire.

The lion is made of yellowish sandstone, and has a massive head, with a well marked chin and open jaws. There is a deep hole in the forehead, but the face is blackened and greasy by number of pilgrims having poured oil over it. On the back are several other holes caused by the erosion of water. The legs are broken off at the shoulders and thighs. The right hip is lower than the left and the tail is missing. From head to foot the lion measures about eleven to twelve feet, and the head is nearly forty inches in diameter. In all probability, the lion sat in an upright posture, and with the forelegs straight, and was originally a lion sejant, not couchant.

The age of the lion can scarcely be determined. It boasts of great antiquity, but whether Median, or Alexandrian or Parthian, would be hard to tell :—

“Where's the wisdom-hoary sage
 Shall unriddle us this page ?
 Temples toppled from their base,
 Victor race o'er running race,
 Yet within the ancient place,
 Mirth and love of maid and man,
 Round the walls of Hamadan.”

CHAPTER XXV

HAMADAN—continued

The Rock Inscriptions of Ganj-Nameh

IF the past of the city of Hamadan is shrouded in mystery, "a wisdom-hoary sage" has unriddled for us the mystery of the rock inscriptions in the mountain gorge of Mount Alwend. To the west of Hamadan, about eight miles on the main caravan road to Tusir Khan and high up in the hills, are two tablets carved in the living rock, with trilingual inscriptions in Iranian, Susian and Babylonian, known as the Ganj-Nameh Tablets (*History of Treasure*) relating the names and titles of Darius, son of Hystaspes, and of his son Xerxes, with an invocation to Hormuzd. They are known as the Ganj-Nameh, because the natives believe that a secret of some hidden treasure is concealed in them, and that this will be revealed to the one who shall be able to decipher them. A carriage road goes for about four miles towards Mount Alwend, and then the road divides, the right one going to Mount Alwend itself and the left to the Ganj-Nameh Tablets. The remaining four miles have to be done on foot, and are a steady ascent amongst granitic rock.

The tablets are six feet six inches by eight feet six inches cut in a red granite cliff. Close by, near a bend in the rock, are two other tablets, which had been carefully prepared for inscriptions but had never been used.

The inscriptions to the left are those of Darius, and read:—

1. A great God is Ahura Mazda who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Darius King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
2. I am Darius, the great King, King of Kings, King of countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide.

The inscription in Babylonian and Susian (or Elamite) is the same.

A little lower down to the right is the tablet of Xerxes which reads:—

1. A great God is Ahura Mazda, who is greatest of the Gods, who created this earth, who created yonder Heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
2. I am Xerxes the great King, King of Kings, King of countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius the King, the Achæmenide.

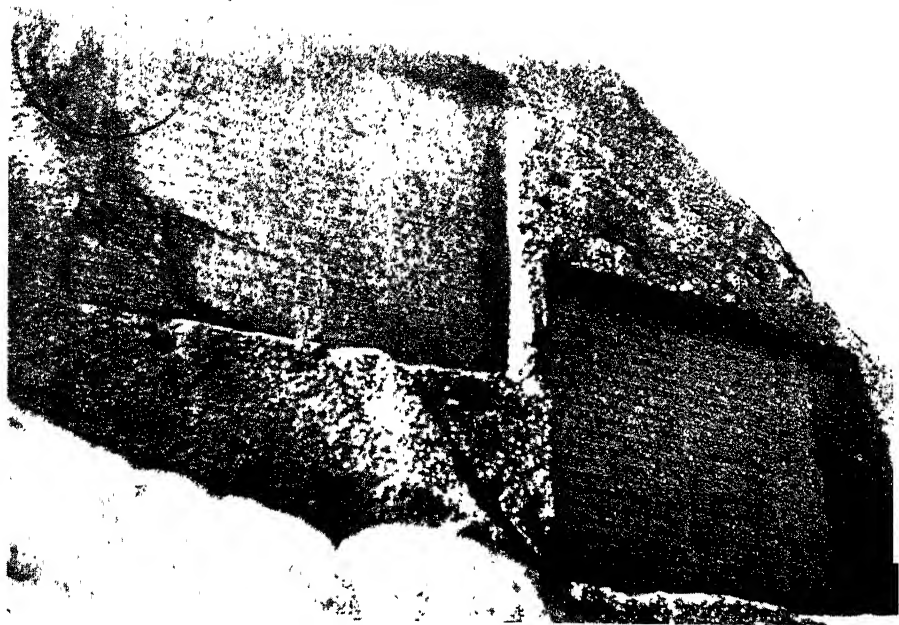
Close to the foot of the rock runs a stream that issues from the mountain, and higher up in the gorge is a waterfall.

Both these inscriptions have suffered from wind and rain, but the Darius tablet is the more damaged of the two. A crack runs from top to bottom, and lower down widens into a fissure with moss growing in it, and destroys several letters.

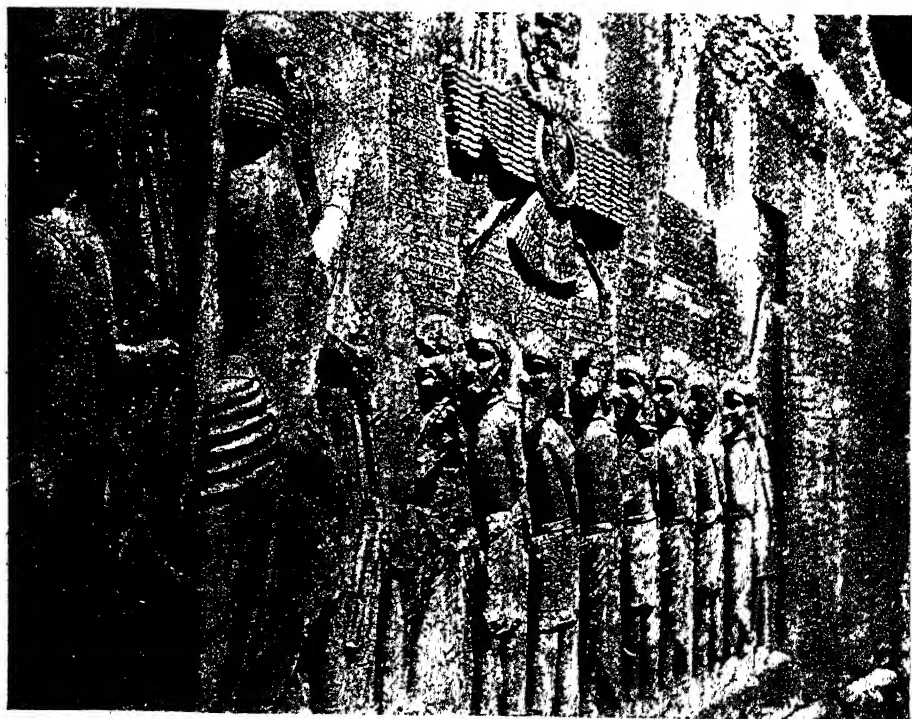
The three columns of Darius are separated from each other by a narrow space, or a perpendicular band, and each column contains about twenty lines of text. The width of the first column is $44\frac{1}{2}$ inches, of the second 29 inches, and of the third $26\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

The Xerxes tablet is also cracked, and the crack damages several words. In width, the first column is 46 inches, the second $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the third 25 inches, and each column has twenty lines of text.

The traveller who is on pleasure bent can visit Dareh Murad Beg in the hills, which is extremely pretty, and is a good place for picnics. An ascent of Mount Alwend can also be made.



THE GANJ-NAMEH TABLETS, NEAR HAMADAN.



INSCRIPTION OF DARIUS HYSTASPES, BEHISTUN.

CHAPTER XXVI

FROM HAMADAN TO THE ROCKS OF BEHISTUN

FROM Hamadan the road goes west through a plain for about eleven miles and passes the small-walled village of Zagheh surrounded by rich cultivation. From Zagheh onwards, the road enters the hills passing Sinnan village and ascends the Asadabad Pass (Gardan-i-Asadabad). The rock here consists of slate with occasional patches of quartz and granite. There are many streams on the way, and the water is good. Large mud ruins are left on the right, and there is a gradual ascent through a fertile and well-cultivated plain. After passing Tajabad, there is a descent, followed by another ascent when the top of the pass is reached. The Alwend Mountains are seen covered with snow. A steep descent now follows, some ruins are passed on the side of a hill, and then comes the village of Asadabad, twenty-five miles from Hamadan, and at an elevation of 5,575 feet. It is a large straggling village, surrounded by gardens, and watered by streams which flow through the town. There is an Iranian Government Telegraph Office here.

Situated at the base of the spurs of Mount Alwend, Asadabad has a fertile soil and temperate climate, and years ago was a well-known place. Yakut, the Arab geographer (A.D. 1300), says that it was formerly the residence of the son of the Sassanian King Khoshru Parviz (A.D. 590-628). The monarch himself resided at Kangavar. The same author relates that "Khoshru's kitchen" was situated midway between Asadabad and Kangavar; and whenever the King dined, a long line of pages "passed the dishes from hand to hand" over the entire distance. His son observed the same custom at Asadabad. The viands, Yakut says, must have been cold when they reached the King, even if borne on eagle's wings, but he adds, that we should understand that "Khoshru's kitchen" was merely the place which served as headquarters from which the royal cuisine was stocked.

Jackson¹ thinks that Asadabad represents in location at least the Bazigraban or Custom-house, mentioned by Isidorus. This Greek geographer entered Media in the first century A.D. and made the following notes ("Parthian Stations") :—

"Three schoeni (nine miles) from the frontier of Upper Media is the city of Konkobar (Kangavar) where there is a temple of Artemis. Three schoeni beyond this is Bazigraban which is the place of receipt of customs. Four schoeni thence to Adrapanam, a palace in the territory of Batana (i.e., Echatana) destroyed by Tigranes the Armenian. Twelve schoeni thence is Batana (i.e., Echatana), the capital of Media, the treasury, and the temple where they sacrifice constantly to Anaitis. Then after that there are three villages, in each of which is a station."

The road goes along the plain, and after another nineteen miles comes to the most interesting city of Kangavar—elevation 6,020 feet, population about 3,500.

"Kangavar is a town of great antiquity, and in the days of Isidore (first century A.D.) was known as Konkobar. According to a Silician historian, Semiramis built a palace here, and laid out a paradise. The ancient Arab writers like Yakut call it the Qasr-al-Lasus or the Robber Castle, because the Arab Army which came here after the battle of Nehavend had

¹ "Persia, Past and Present."

some pack-animals stolen by robbers ; but more likely because the place was infested later on by bandits.

The city stands under a high hill and at the west-south-west of a fertile plain ten miles square, and is built on a series of natural and artificial mounds.

The chief interest of Konkobar or Kangavar lies in the fact that here was a temple to Diana, or Ardvi Sura Anahita. The worship of Anahita came in the time of Artaxerxes Mnemon (350 B.C.), and spread to Media, Susiana and Cappadocia. The temple was present in Isidore's time. Yakut (A.D. 1220) described it as follows :—

“The Robber Castle is a very remarkable monument, and there is a platform some twenty cubits above the ground, and on it, there are vast portals, palaces and pavilions, remarkable for their solidity and their beauty.”

On the crest of a hill above the town are the ruins of a fortress. The mounds over which the town is situated are being excavated now. They are right in the middle of the town. Enormous blocks of stone are seen, which probably formed a platform or rectangular terrace. Three columns, each nearly six feet in diameter, are standing over the platform, and were built into the mud walls of a modern house near the bazaar. The ruins in the town show definite Hellenistic influence, the columns being a kind of Doric, and the whole building showing a definite Greek style. In all probability, the temple was built after the Achæmenian days, and during the Parthian period.

Just outside the town lying prone on the ground in a confused mass of rubbish, are several broken columns, perhaps the remains of those that once used to be on the platform.

The bazaars of Kangavar are uncovered, and the alleys are narrow and tortuous. Just before coming to the city on the road is a kava khaneh, where tea and light refreshments can be obtained.

The mountains which encompass Kangavar are the Kuh-i-Hassan, Boka, the Kuh-i-Paran, and the Kuh-i-Boza.

The road now lies through the broad vale of Kangavar, for about sixteen miles, and then ascends the Gardan-i-Bidsurkh (Red Earth Ridge), elevation 5,800 feet. It is so called from the soil which is red. It is really the top of the Kotal-i-Saneh (Saneh Pass.) On the other side of the Kotal, situated at the foot of a range of precipitous rocky hills, is the town of Sahneh, about thirty-seven miles east of Kermanshah. The town is surrounded by gardens, and contains about two hundred houses. A torrent having its rise in a gorge about one farsakh from the town runs through the gardens. The old caravanserai built by the Haji of Nirwan is now in ruins, but Sahneh has a new caravanserai and a kava khaneh.

Leaving Sahneh, the road winds through the hills, and sixteen miles further on are the town and the rocks of Behistun or Bisitun. The town is at an elevation of 4,500 feet and has four hundred houses and a good caravanserai. The Gamasiab, an affluent of the Kara Su, flows past Behistun, where there is a good brick bridge. There is a caravanserai and a kava khaneh here. The rock of Bisitun is nearly perpendicular and 1,500 feet in height, and rises abruptly from the plain. Here are the famous inscriptions and carvings of Darius, son of Hystaspes.

At a height of about three hundred feet above the ground, upon a smoothed portion of the surface of the rock, are the sculptures, and the cuneiform record of the reign of Darius. The main cuneiform inscriptions are still intact, though some of the sculptures and inscriptions are illegible. They are inaccessible and can only be got at by means of a ladder. The surface of the rock must have been smoothed, then every crevice filled with inlaid stone, and then the characters chiselled. Lastly, a coat of siliceous varnish was spread over the whole as a protection.

The bas-reliefs on top are those of Darius, and of the rebels tied to each other by the neck, whom he overcame. His heel is even now on the prostrate body of one. Behind the King stand two warriors or Vazirs, armed with bow and spear. Above the monarch and the prisoners are tablets with their names. Over the head of the King are the words:—"I am Darius, the great King, the King of Kings, King of Iran, King of the Provinces, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achæmenian."

Saith Darius the King:—My father is Hystaspes; the father of Hystaspes was Arsames; the father of Arsames was Ariyaramnes; the father of Ariyaramnes was Teispes; the father of Teispes was Achæmenes.

Saith Darius the King:—On that account are we called Achæmenians; from antiquity are we descended; from antiquity has our race been Kings.

Saith Darius the King:—Eight of my race were Kings before me; I am the ninth. In a double line have we been Kings.

The prisoners before the Great King are in the following order:—

The first is Gaumata the Magian whom Darius dispossessed and slew. He is the prostrate figure with upstretched hands. The inscription runs, "This Gaumata, the Magian lied, saying:—

'I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus. I am King.'

The next is Atrind, the Susian pretender, and the text says:—

"This Atrina lied, I am King of Susiana."

The third is Nidintu Bel. This Nidintu Bel lied, saying:—

"I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidus—I am King of Babylon."

The fourth is Phraortes, the Median pretender:—

This Phraortes lied, saying:— "I am Khshathrita, of the race of Cyaxares. I am King of Media."

The fifth is Martiya, the Susian pretender. This Martiya lied, saying "I am Ummannish, King of Susiana."

Over the sixth is the inscription—"This Citratakhma lied,' saying:—
'I am King of Sagartia, of the race of Cyaxares.'"

The seventh is Vahyazdata, the Iran pretender, the legend over him reading, "This Vahyazdata lied, saying:—'I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus. I am King.'"

The eighth is Arakha, the Babylonian pretender, the legend reading:—

"This Arakha lied, saying, 'I am Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nabonidus; I am King of Babylon.'"

The ninth is Frada, the Magian pretender, the legend reading :—

“ This Frada lied, saying :—‘ I am King of Margiana.’ ”

The last is Skunka, the Scythian, probably added at a later period and the inscription runs :—

“ This is Skunka, the Scythian.”

It will be seen that the King has a superhuman stature, while the humiliation of the prisoners is shown by their diminutive size.

Below these sculptures is the entire cuneiform inscription in Iranian, Susian and Babylonian characters, which together occupy a surface about a hundred and fifty feet in length by a hundred feet in height, and amounting to nearly a thousand lines. These were engraved by the order of Darius, on his return from the destruction of Babylon, which had revolted under Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidus.

A translation of part of it is given below. The death of Cambyses is interesting, for it is recorded in history that Cambyses died from a sword wound of the thigh, while the inscription of Darius says that he committed suicide. The Iranian cuneiforms are in the centre below the sculptures, the Susian and Neo-Elamite are to the left of the ledge, and the Babylonian above this, and above on the right. Water has oozed out of the rock, and has washed away portions of the inscription.

“ I am Darius, the King, the King of Kings, the King of Iran, the great King of the Provinces, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achæmenian. *Says Darius the King* :—My father was Hystaspes ; of Hystaspes the father was Arsames ; of Arsames the father was Ariyaramnes ; of Ariyaramnes the father was Teispes ; of Teispes the father was Achæmenes. *Says Darius the King* :—On that account, we are called Achæmenians. From antiquity we have descended : from antiquity those of our races have been Kings. *Says Darius the King* :—There are eight of my race who have been Kings before me : I am the ninth. In a double line we have been Kings. *Says Darius the King* :—By the grace of Ormuzd, I am King. Ormuzd has granted to me the Empire. *Says Darius the King* :—These are the countries which belong to me : by the Grace of Ormuzd, I have become King of them, Iran, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, those of which are of the sea, Sparta and Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, the Sacae, the Sattyagades, Arachotia and Maka ; in all twenty-three countries.

Thus saith Darius the King.—These are the provinces that are subject unto me ; they brought tribute unto me. Whatsoever commands have been laid on them by me, by night or by day, have been performed by them.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Within these lands, whosoever was a friend, him have I surely protected ; whosoever was hostile him have I utterly destroyed. By the grace of Ahura Mazda, these lands have conformed to my decrees ; even as it was commanded unto them by me, so was it done.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Ahura Mazada hath granted unto me this empire. Ahura Mazda brought me help until I gained this empire ; by the grace of Ahura Mazda do I hold this empire.

Thus saith Darius the King.—This is what was done by me after I became King. He who was named Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, one of our race, was King here before me. That Cambyses had a brother Smerdis by name, of the same mother and the same father as Cambyses. Afterwards Cambyses slew this Smerdis. When Cambyses slew Smerdis, it was not known unto the people that Smerdis was slain. Thereupon Cambyses went into Egypt. When Cambyses had departed into Egypt, the people became hostile, and the lie multiplied in the land, even in Iran, as in Media, and in the other provinces.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Afterwards there was a certain man, a Magian, Gaumata by name, who raised a rebellion in Paishiyavada, in a mountain named Arakadrish. On the 14th day of the month, Viyakhna did he rebel. He lied unto the people saying:—"I am Smerdis the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses." Then were all the people in revolt, and from Cambyses they went over unto him, both Iran and Media, and the other provinces. He seized on the Kingdom; on the ninth day of the month Gaunapada he seized on the kingdom. Afterwards Cambyses died by his own hand.

Thus saith Darius the King.—The kingdom of which Gaumata, the Magian dispossessed Cambyses had belonged to our race from olden time. After that, Gaumata the Magian had dispossessed Cambyses of Iran and of Media, and of the other provinces, he did according to his will, he was King.

Thus saith Darius the King.—There was no man, either Iranian or Median or of our own race who took the kingdom from Gaumata, the Magian. The people feared him exceedingly, for he slew many who had known the former Smerdis. For this reason did he slay them, "That they may not know that, I am not Smerdis the son of Cyrus." There was none who dared say aught against Gaumata the Magian until I came. Then I prayed to Ahura Mazda: Ahura Mazda brought me help. On the tenth day of the month Bagayadish, I, with a few men, slew that Gaumata, the Magian, and the chief men who were his followers. At the stronghold named Sikayauvatish in the district named Nisaya in Media, I slew him; I dispossessed him of the Kingdom. By the grace of Ahura Mazda, I became King: Ahura Mazda granted me the Kingdom.

Thus saith Darius the King.—The Kingdom that had been wrested from our line I brought back, and I established it in its place as it was of old. The temples which Gaumata the Magian had destroyed, I restored for the people, and the pasture-lands, and the herds, and the dwelling-places, and the houses which Gaumata, the Magian, had taken away. I settled the people in their place, Iran, Media, and the other provinces. I restored that which had been taken away, as it was in the days of old. Thus did I by the grace of Ahura Mazda, I laboured until I had established our house in its place, as in the days of old. I laboured by the grace of Ahura Mazda, so that Gaumata, the Magian, did not possess our house.

Thus saith Darius the King.—This is what I did after I became King."

Then follows an account of the rebellions in Susiana, Babylonia, the capture of Babylon, the rebellion in Media, the Armenian campaign, and rebellions in Iran and other countries, and finally the King appeals to posterity.

"*Thus saith Darius the King.*—By the grace of Ahura Mazda there is also much else that hath been done by me which is not graven in this

inscription ; on that account, it hath not been inscribed lest he who shall read this inscription hereafter should then hold that which hath been done by me to be too much, and should not believe it, but should take it to be lies.

Thus saith Darius the King.—It was not done by the former Kings during their time, as it hath always been done by me through the favour of Ahura Mazda.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Now may that appear true unto thee which hath been done by me ; so conceal thou not. If thou shalt not conceal this edict, but shall publish it to the world, then may Ahura Mazda be thy friend, may thy house be numerous, and mayst thou thyself be long lived.

Thus saith Darius the King.—If thou shalt conceal this edict, and shall not publish it to the world, may Ahura Mazda slay thee, and may thy house cease.

Thus saith Darius the King.—This is what I have done ; by the grace of Ahura Mazda have I always acted. Ahura Mazda, and the other Gods that there are brought aid unto me.

Thus saith Darius the King.—On this account Ahura Mazda brought me help, and the other Gods that there are, because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a tyrant, neither I, nor any of my line. According to Rectitude have I ruled. Whosoever helped my house, him I favoured ; he who was hostile, him I destroyed.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Thou who mayst be King hereafter, whosoever be a liar or a rebel, or shall not be friendly, him do thou destroy.

Thus saith Darius the King.—Thou who shalt hereafter see this tablet, which I have written, or these sculptures, destroy them not, but preserve them so long as thou livest.

Thus saith Darius the King.—If thou shalt behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shall not destroy them, but shall preserve them as long as thy line endureth, then may Ahura Mazda be thy friend, and may thy house be numerous. Live long, and may Ahura Mazda make fortunate whatsoever thou doest.

Thus saith Darius the King.—If thou shalt behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shalt destroy them, and shalt not preserve them, so long as thy line endureth, then may Ahura Mazda slay thee, and may thy race come to nought, and whatsoever thou doest, may Ahura Mazda destroy."

How literally this prophecy was fulfilled ! The Russians wilfully fired on these tablets during the Great War of 1914-18. What happened to the Czar and his family is known to all. The indentations made by the bullets are clearly visible.

At the base of the rock opposite to these sculptures are some mutilated equestrian figures and an inscription declaring them to be the work of Gotarzes, the Parthian King, about A.D. 46-51. This relief contained two compositions. One of these, twenty-eight feet six inches broad, contains colossal bearded figures from eight to nine feet in height ; two are on the left,

and one on the right. The central portion was destroyed about a hundred years ago by the builder of the caravanserai in the village of Bisitun, who made a palimpsest, and put in a tablet twelve feet wide in the rock to commemorate his work. The other composition is eighteen feet broad by ten feet six inches high, and mutilated. The figures are in low relief. In the centre is a horseman, and above his head is a winged figure flying to crown him with a wreath. He is unhorsing a second horseman. The victorious horseman is the Parthian King Gotarzes, A.D. 46-50, and his enemy is Meherdates. Meherdates was also a Parthian but was brought up at the court of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and made an unsuccessful attempt to gain possession of the Iranian crown. Behind Gotarzes are the remains of another mounted figure, with his lance in rest. The figures are now nearly obliterated.

The tablet in the centre, the palimpsest over the earlier epigraph, is an Arabic inscription which relates the terms upon which the caravanserai was bequeathed to the people. A gift of the income of two villages was donated by Sheikh Ali Khan Zanganeh for keeping up the caravanserai he had built at Behistun.

Not far from the Gotarzes panel, around the right flank of the mountain is a huge monolith boulder of stone about ten feet in height on which are sculptured figures in low relief. The monolith is a six-sided rock, with figures sculptured on three of its sides.

The central figure facing the approach up the mound is bearded, and with a moustache. He wears a tunic which reaches upto his knees. Round his waist is a girdle ornamented with discs, the two ends hanging in front of him. On his head is a round cap with a bow on each side. Two streamers fall over the shoulder to the waist. Round his throat is a necklace of which a few rings can be seen. In his left hand is a cup, and his right hand rests on what might be a small altar. He wears pleated trousers which are tucked into high boots. The legs are fat, and spread apart. The upper part of the figure is full faced, while the feet are in profile and turned to the right. The figure may be a Magian priest or an Achæmenian King.

On each side of the central figure are two other figures, which both lean towards the central figure. The figure on the right side of the boulder has a fat face and no beard, and looks very much like a eunuch. There is a necklace about the throat, and a bracelet on the left arm. The legs are fat. He wears a plain tunic and trousers, and holds with both hands a curved object. The weight is thrown on the right foot.

The figure on the left of the boulder approaches the central figure. The face has a beard, and in his right hand he holds a staff or spear which rests upon the ground. The spear is now very indistinct.

The top of the rock is flat, and the workmanship of the sculptures is exceedingly crude and rough.

Near this monolith and between it and the plain are large numbers of burnt bricks showing that a building once stood there. Opposite the village of Behistun, and as one faces the rock, at some height above the plain is a huge space about eighty to hundred feet in length, and from five hundred to five hundred and forty feet in width, which has been cut away, and a smooth surface formed without any inscription. The tool marks of the masons are still to be seen on the surface of the rock. Above the cutting the natural rock projects in some places forming a framework ; while below and in front

is a platform made of earth and rocks, extending forward from the rock for a distance of three hundred feet. This platform was never finished. At the base of the slope are the remains of a massive wall, unfinished, and formed of rough stones, which probably was the retaining wall of the platform. The smooth surface must have been prepared to receive some inscription or rock sculptures, but what it was, one never can say, though one can give various guesses as to what it might have been. At the present day, this blank space bears the marks of the Russian bullets that were fired on it during the Great European War of 1914-18.

Sir H. Rawlinson considered that there were good reasons for identifying Behistun or Bisitun with the Baghistan or the Palace of Gardens of the Greeks, and with the pleasure grounds and sculptures of Semiramis, who encamped near by on her march from Babylon to Ecbatana, built a "paradise" here, and commemorated the occasion by having caused her own image and that of her hundred guards to be graven on the rock. Not a trace of all this now remains.

A few words about the decipherment of the cuneiform alphabet may not be amiss here. The German philologist Grotefend first solved the mystery of the cuneiform writing. Placing side by side two of the Persepolitan tablets, which he thought to be Achæmenian records, he guessed that the word so often repeated was the name for the King, while the name before it was the name of the King himself. In this way, he found the names of Darius, Hystaspes and Xerxes. In 1802, he laid his researches before the Academy of Sciences at Gottingen. The credit of having deciphered the Ganj-Nameh Tablets, and the inscriptions on the Behistun rock belongs to Sir Henry Rawlinson, who at that time was military officer in the army of the Shah. By superhuman efforts and at risk of life and limb he managed to take paper squeezes of the rock inscriptions, and made several ascents of the rock between 1835 and 1837. The Babylonian squeezes were got for him by a Kurdish lad in 1847, and having learned to decipher the cuneiform alphabet while in Hamadan, he was able to give to the world the transcription of the wonderful inscriptions.

CHAPTER XXVII

TAK-I-BOSTAN AND KERMANSHAH

LEAVING Piru, the great rock mass of Behistun behind, the road passes over undulating ground, bounded on the north by the Kuh Piru, the mountain ridge that runs from Behistun to Tak-i-Bostan, and on the south by the spurs of the great hills that run from Kermanshah to Luristan. This country is very fertile, and is renowned for producing good horses for which Iran has been famous. The Gamasiab River near Bisitun and the Kara Su, near Kermanshah, which eventually flows into the Gamasiab, make the region a succession of meadows.

At about four miles from Kermanshah, the road forks, the one more or less a track going north-west to Tak-i-Bostan at the foot of the northern range of hills, and the other which is the continuation of the main road turning south to a good brick bridge over the Kara Su, after crossing which Kermanshah is reached. The best time to take photographs of Tak-i-Bostan is in the evening about sunset, when the interior of the arches is illuminated by the setting sun. If the traveller comes from Hamadan about evening time it is advisable to make the detour to Tak-i-Bostan before proceeding to Kermanshah.

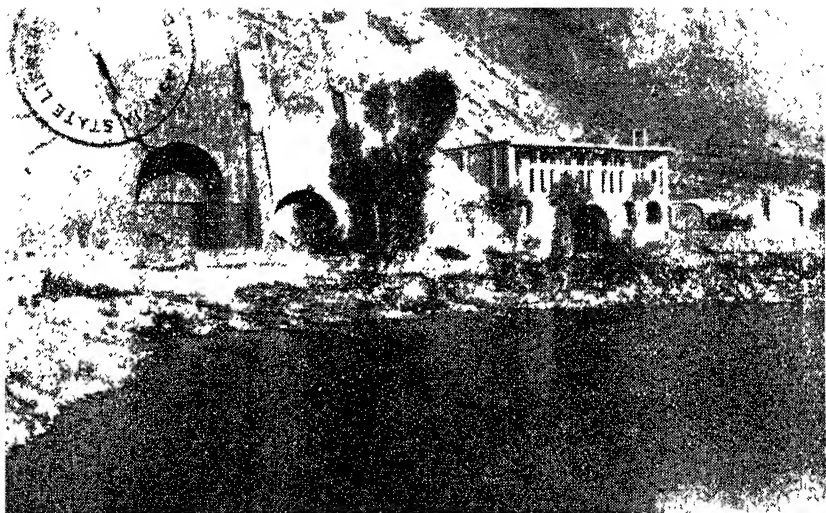
Tak-i-Bostan lies four miles north-east of Kermanshah, and is a regular picnic spot for the people of that town. It is now part of the estate of an Iranian landowner, the late Haji Agha Hassan, Vakil-ud-Dowleh (Deputy of State), and once British Agent at Kermanshah.

Before dealing with the antiquities of Tak-i-Bostan (the Arch of the Garden), which name is given to it on account of the arched recesses carved in the rocks at the base of the mountain, I shall relate the history of its foundation. Tales of love and intrigue surrounded the throne of Khoshru Parviz, the last of the independent Sassanian Kings. He was devoted to his Christian Queen Shirin, and in the sixth century A.D. commissioned the Architect Farhad to build a palace here. During the progress of the work, Queen Shirin frequently came to watch Farhad at his labours. Love was awakened between them, and many secret meetings were arranged. One was discovered by the King, who told Farhad that if he could bring water through the rocks of Behistun and form a lake, he could claim Shirin. It was apparently an impossible task, but very ingeniously the sculptor directed streams from the hills, bored through the rocks to an outlet that, continually flowing, formed a large and ornamental lake in front that exists to-day.

The King's command accomplished, Farhad claimed Shirin, but he was then falsely told that she was dead. The sculptor straightaway climbed to the high rock forming the "Bower of the Queen" over the carvings, and in despair threw himself over to his death below, crying as he fell, "Oh Shirin, my sweet Shirin."

Tak-i-Bostan now contains several tanks of clear water, a two-storeyed building built into the rock by the orders of the late Vakil-ud-Dowleh at the point where the water gushes from the rock into the pond. There are arched recesses in the rock which contains the sculptures. The two large tanks or reservoirs planted around with trees are the work of the Vakil-ud-Dowleh.

The arches are executed with great labour and skill; within them are several bas-reliefs, close to the arches, and between them and the building



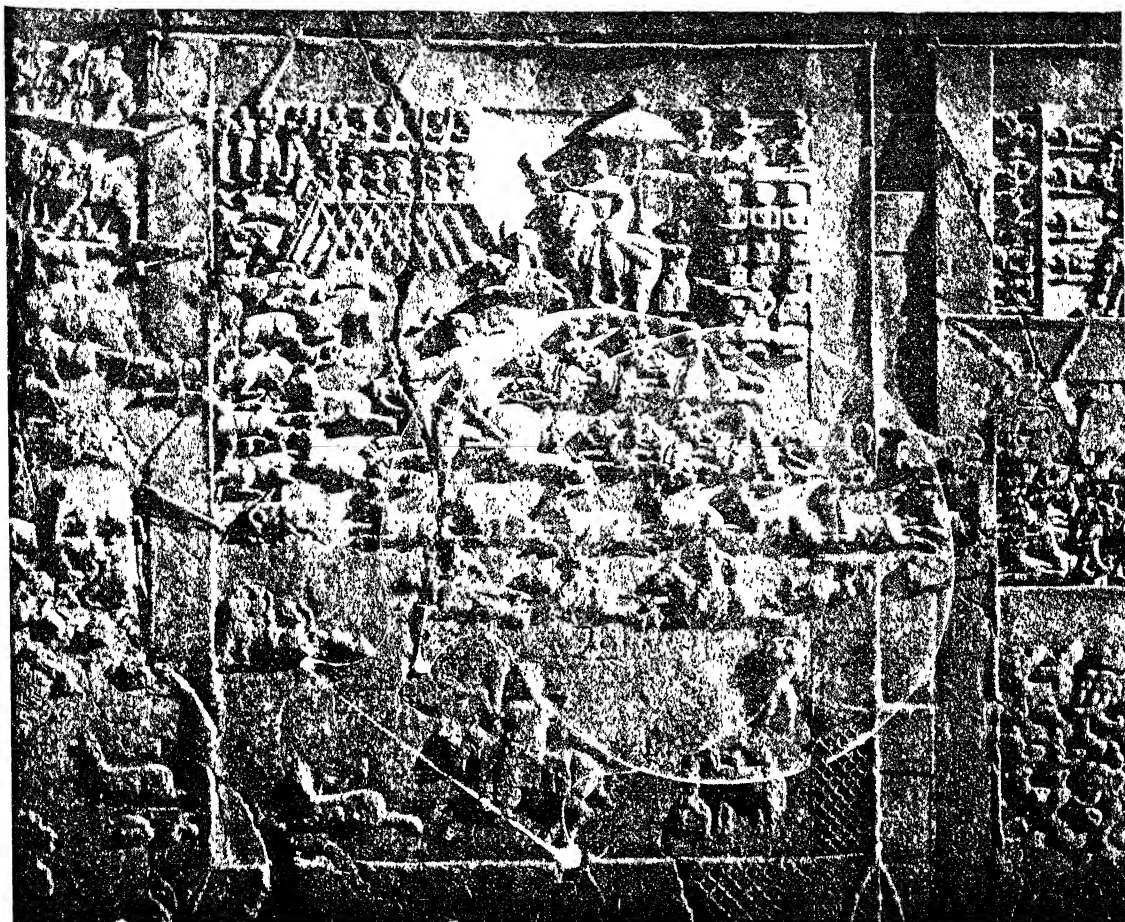
TAK-I-BOSTAN



Above—KHOSHRU PARVIZ BETWEEN ORMUZD AND ANAHITA.

Below—KHOSHRU PARVIZ ON HIS HORSE SHAH DIZ.

TAK-I-BOSTAN.



HUNTING SCENE, TAK-I-BOSTAN.

By kind permission of the Iran L



ARDESHIR AND SHAPUR. ZOROASTER (? AHURA MAZDA) IS STANDING BETWEEN ARDESHIR AND SHAPUR.

is another bas-relief, while a little beyond, a flight of several hundred steps is cut on the edge of the precipitous cliffs, while on the top is an extensive platform.

The largest arch which is on the extreme left facing the monuments measures over thirty feet in height, twenty-four feet in width, and twenty-two in depth. Above the arch and on each side, the surface of the rock has been smoothed over. On the surface, to the right and left are entablatures with carved ornamentation adorned with foliage. Above the keystone is a crescent, and in the spandrels on either side are two winged female figures, holding coronets in one hand, and cups in the other. They are sculptured in Roman style. Below the spandrels on either side of the arched entrance are flowered panels, varying slightly in detail.

Inside the arch, the rear wall is divided into two compartments, the upper one of which contains three figures, Chosroes II (Khoshru Parviz, A.D. 590-628) in the centre in robes of state, and wearing the Sassanian crown holding his sword before him with the point resting on the ground. With his right hand he receives a chaplet decked with streamers, which is presented by a bearded figure clad in a long mantle belted at the waist, a tunic, and heavy trousers that do not quite reach to the ankle. To the right of the King is a woman who presents to the King a garland of victory and pours upon the ground a libation from a vessel in her left hand. It is not known who those two figures are, but it has been suggested that the one to the right may be Queen Shirin, while the one on the left may be the Architect Farhad, or the Prime Minister of the King or a High Priest of the Magi; another version says that there is a princess on the one side holding a diadem, and the Byzantine Emperor Mauricius on the other, presenting the new King with the crown to which the arms of the Romans had restored him. Another suggestion is that the figures are those of Ahura Mazda and Anahita. In the absence of any inscriptions, one can only guess.

The lower compartment is occupied by a colossal equestrian statue of Chosroes II, mounted on his renowned charger, Shab Diz (Black as Night). Horse and rider are covered with a coat of mail, and the rider has a spear poised in his right hand and a round shield in his left. The sculpture has been damaged by the Arabs and Kurds, and there are no remains of the inscriptions once engraven upon it. The nose and mouth of the horse have disappeared, and the horseman has lost his right foot and a portion of his lower clothing. The modern Kurd calls this the statue of Rustam and his horse Raksh, but as all the panels relate to Khoshru Parviz, there seems no reason why this particular statue should be that of Rustam on his horse.

The sides of the arch are covered with scenes in the life of the King. Entering the chamber, on the right-hand side is carved a hunting scene, in which the King is engaged in pursuit of the deer. The King is seen at the top of the sculpture under an umbrella and mounted on a richly caparisoned horse. Below, the King is again seen riding at full speed. The King with a dozen mounted horsemen takes part, assisted by footmen and by a detachment mounted on elephants. The elephants are nine in number, and occupy the extreme right of the tablet. They are seen to be driving the deer into certain prepared enclosures. There are three riders on the back of each of them, of whom the central one alone has the support of a saddle. There are three enclosures surrounded by nets where the elephants drive the game, but there is an exit only in the central one; this is guarded by two footmen, and from this exit, the game passes into the central field of the sculpture where the King awaits them. It is not clear whether he himself

takes part in the chase, or whether he just witnesses it. The game is pursued and killed, and in the compartment on the left, it is properly arranged, and placed upon camels for conveyance to the royal palace. In the bottom part the King is seen riding home. There are twenty-six musicians, some of whom occupy an elevated platform. The human forms are about seventy, and the animal forms about one hundred.

On the left-hand side of the recess is a boar hunt. Here twelve elephants with their riders plunge through the reeds, and drive the game towards the King into an enclosure without exit. Within the enclosure there are nearly a hundred boar and pigs. Here the ground is marshy, and there are reeds intersected by lakes. The King occupies a boat in the centre. He is seen standing with bow full bent. No one else takes part in the chase. When the pigs fall, they are carried into a second enclosure, that on the right, where they are upturned, disembowelled and placed across the backs of elephants, which convey them to the abode of the monarch. There are two boats of harpers on either side of that which carries the King, while another harper sits with him in the boat from which he delivers his arrows. In the water are seen reeds, ducks and fishes. The oars have a resemblance to those seen in the early Assyrian sculptures. Towards the top left-hand side is a boat with five people in it clapping their hands to drive the pigs towards the monarch; in the centre of the picture to the right of the one in which the King is standing with his bow, is another boat, more highly ornamented than the rest, in which the King has a halo or nimbus round his head receiving an arrow from one of the men while close to him is a musician playing the harp. In the other compartment, elephants are seen in pursuit of the deer, and camels carrying off the spoil. Here there are more than seventy-five human forms and nearly a hundred and fifty animal forms.

Above this ancient panel, Mohammed Ali Mirza, son of Feth Ali Shah, when Governor of Kermanshah, had carved a pompous image of himself.

On the outer wall, near the steps to the right is a panel with a *modern* Iranian inscription, commemorating the visit of Nasr-ed-din Shah. Neither of these two have anything to do with the ancient sculptures.

The second arch to the right, is smaller than the first, and is nineteen feet wide by eleven and a half feet in depth and seventeen feet in height. The sculptures are badly defaced having been wilfully mutilated, but the identity of the personages are given by inscriptions. The sculptures represent two Kings. Each holds before him a sword, blade downwards, the point resting on the ground, while the hilt is clasped in both hands which rest over it. The dress is Sassanian. To the right is Shapur II (Shapur Zulaktaf), who reigned from A.D. 309-379, and who was the antagonist of five Roman Emperors—Constantine, Julian and Jovian, Valentinian and Valens. To the left is Shapur III, who reigned from A.D. 383-388, and was assassinated in an uprising of the soldiers, and succeeded by his brother Varahran IV, the founder of Kermanshah.

The figures of Shapur II and Shapur III look towards each other and stand in an arched frame. The inscriptions on either side of the figures are in the old Pehlavi character, and run thus:—

“ Pathkeli Zani Mazdisn Shahia Shapuri, malkan malka, Airan ve Aniran, Minuchetri min Yazdan, bari Mazdisn Shahia Ahuramazdi, malkan malka Airan wa Aniran, Minuchetri min Yazdan, napi Shahia Narshahi malkan malka ”; and

"Pathkeli Mazdisn Shahia Shapuri, malkan malka Airan wa Aniran, Minuchetri min Yazdan, bari Mazdisn Shahia Shapuri, malkan malka Airan wa Aniran, Minuchetri min Yazdan, Napi Shahia Ahura Mazdi, malkan malka."

The meaning of the first is.—"This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipping Kingly Shapur, King of the Kings of Iran and Turan, heaven descended of the race of the Gods, son of the Ormuzd-worshipping King Hormisdas, King of the Kings of Iran and Turan, heaven descended of the race of the Gods, grandson of the Kingly Narses, King of Kings." The other inscription is identical, except in the names, and the omission of the second word "Zani =this." The names in the right-hand inscription are "Shapur Hormisdas, Narses," while those in the left hand are "Shapur, Shapur, Hormisdas." It is supposed that the right-hand figure was erected by Shapur II, and the other afterwards added by Shapur III, but the unity of the whole sculpture and all under a single arch seems to show that it was the idea of one monarch only. If this be so, then the work must be attributed to Shapur III, the later of the two monarchs.

The sculptures are not good. There is an elaborate finish of the details of the costume, but the contours are clumsy, and there is a want of contrast and variety. The whole production is coarse.

A little to the right of the second arch, between it and the villa, on the face of the cliff, is a Sassanian panel, in which there are two crowned figures standing upon the prostrate body of a third, while behind the left-hand King is a fourth figure which is standing on a sunflower and whose head is surrounded with a radiated nimbus.

The central figure of the three is a King who stands with his left hand on his sword, and his right hand grasping the cydaris or royal circlet, which he bestows upon the second royal personage. The latter stands before him with his right hand on the circlet, and his left hand resting on his hip. The first King wears the globular crown characteristic of Sassanian Kings, whereas the second one wears a mural crown. Both Kings have the costume of the Sassanian period, and wear the Sassanian head decoration of streamers.

The prostrate figure is trampled on by the two Kings, the one standing on his head, the other on his feet. The head of the prostrate form rests upon his left arm. The helmet is decorated by a band, and has large bosses, and looks like the nail-studded helmets of the Parthian Kings. The face is bearded. The scabbard is marked with grooves. There is a necklace round the throat. The size of the fallen image is about seven feet three inches.

The fourth figure to the left, standing behind the King, is extremely interesting. The body is clothed in a robe, and there is a belt at the waist. At the neck there is an embroidered border with tassels, possibly a necklace. His head is encircled by a halo, and on his head there is a cap covering a lot of hair. There is a moustache on the upper lip, and the beard is curly. In his hand he holds a staff. The peculiar head-dress with flowing streamers is very clearly seen. The trousers are flowing and fringed, and the foot-gear is the same as those of the Kings. He stands on a sunflower, showing perhaps a symbol of sun worship. The size of the statue is about seven feet, but unfortunately it is mutilated, and the eyes, nose and forehead have been destroyed.

The general opinion of the sculpture is that the central figure is Ardeshir Babagan, and the one on the right is Shapur I. It represents the investiture of Shapur I with a share of the dominion by his father. The prostrate figure is supposed to be Artabanus V, the last Parthian King. The figure on the

left is either Ahura Mazda the God, or Zoroaster the Prophet of Iran. With his baton, he looks on the transaction between Ardeshir and Shapur, and sanctions and approves it. Round him is the halo of glory.

Whether the figure is that of Ahura Mazda or Zoroaster, is difficult to say, but the trend of present opinion is against identifying it with Zoroaster. But the Parsis of India, and those of Iran have taken it to represent Zoroaster, and this is the picture of the Prophet taken by the Parsis. Moreover, if it be Ahura Mazda, the sculpture differs considerably from the other sculptures of Ahura Mazda at the Naksh-i-Rustam and the Naksh-i-Rajab.

There are steps out in the rock leading over the arches to a platform called the Nakkareh-Khaneh (Drum Tower) while others branch off and lead higher up the rocks.

From the mountains issue five springs which are collected into two tanks or reservoirs each about one hundred and twenty-one paces square. Over the springs is the villa, which consists on the ground floor of a large vault under which there is a small tank from which great volumes of water gush out, especially in winter, and flow into the reservoirs. A pathway shaded by willows leads around the pond, and on the other side of the pond at the water's edge, are fragments of marble columns, broken capitals of pillars, and one broken colossal statue dating back to Sassanian times.

Kermanshah

Six miles to the west of Tak-i-Bostan is the town of Kermanshah in the province of the same name. The town is surrounded by mountains, and is nearly equidistant from Baghdad, Isfahan, Teheran and Tabriz. Before entering the town, a barrier has to be passed where all passports are examined.

Kermanshah, altitude 4,860 feet, was built by Bahram IV, son of Shapur II (Zulaktaf), who under the reign of his father conquered Kerman, and governed it under the name of Kermanshah. He reigned from A.D. 389-399. Kobad I (A.D. 491-532), son of Pirozes, rebuilt the town, which was afterwards beautified by his son, Khoshru Anushirwan (A.D. 532-579), known as Anushirwan the Just; his grandson Khushru Parviz added to the place. Anushirwan is supposed to have built a palace wherein he received the homage of the Emperor of Rome, the Ruler of China, and of the Khan of the Tartars. No ruins of this are to be seen, and in all probability the town was situated close to Tak-i-Bostan in Sassanian times, where at present there are large mud embankments.

In later times, the fortifications were built in 1723, after its conquest by Nadir Shah. The town was several times pillaged by the Zends under the direction of Kerim Khan who was then a highway man. Mohammed Ali Mirza, the son of Feth Ali Shah, when Governor of Kermanshah, beautified the town and surrounded it by walls flanked with loopholed towers and by a moat. All this has completely disappeared now. The town used to have five gates, the Darwazeh Kaliskeh, Darwazeh Kassab Khaneh, Darwazeh Yahudieh leading to the Teheran road, Darwazeh Sarab leading to Mahidasht, and Darwazeh Chia Surkh leading to the Baghdad road. These gates have also disappeared but the names have remained.

In July 1910 the Kalhurs threatened Kermanshah, and attempts were made to break into the British Consulate. About a year afterwards, Salar-ud-Dowleh, brother of the ex-Shah Mohammed Ali, entered Kermanshah and was joined by the local levies. Soon after, he occupied Hamadan and Sultanabad, and advanced to within fifty miles of Teheran. Two months afterwards Yprim, Armenian Chief of Police, with Sardar Bahadur Bakhtiari

defeated the Salar at Zarand, Yprim being killed, and again in November at Burujird. However, he rallied, and occupied Kermanshah in December, the Governor of the town taking refuge in the British Consulate. Early in 1912, the Government troops reoccupied Kermanshah. Salar fled, but returned a little later with a Kurdish force and recaptured the town. The Kurds looted Kermanshah, and Salar took his revenge by cutting off the Governor's legs, and burning him alive. For the next few months Salar and the Farman Farma occupied Kermanshah in turns, and once they even exchanged possession of Kermanshah and Sinneh within a few days, without encountering each other.

In 1913, the Turks established a Consular Guard of fifteen men. Kermanshah was quite an important place after the Great War of 1914-18, and British and Indian Hospitals were established here at that time. It was finally evacuated by the British in 1921.

Kermanshah is at present an absolutely open town standing on rolling ground. It is connected with the hills of Feth Ali Khan, Chia Surkh, and Kamarzad. Chia Surkh, which is covered with small huts and mean houses, inhabited by the lower Kurdish population, marks the end of the town to the south. The town approached from the Baghdad side looks picturesque on account of the green gardens there, but from the Hamadan side there are no relieving features. The plain of Kermanshah extends six miles in length from north to south and thirty miles from east to west.

The principal street in Kermanshah is the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi, a fine broad street.

There is very little of interest to see in Kermanshah. The Governor's Palace is approached from the Artillery Square by a slope ended by a large gate and then through vaulted passages. It has a Dewan Khaneh with a Talar, the upper part of which was covered with tiles of fine value. It is composed of twelve courtyards surrounded by rooms and apartments. In the Grand Court are two monoliths of porphyry supposed to have been brought from the Behistun Hills. The hauz is now in ruins. Here were organized military displays and speeches on Iran's former glory, and exhortations made to officers and men to carry on their old traditions of loyalty to the King of Kings.

The Artillery Square is a big maidan or square, two hundred and forty feet long and ninety-five feet wide, in front of the Governor's Palace. In the midst of this square is a large reservoir, and most bazaars end here. Around the square are shops adjoining the bazaars. The Arsenal is behind the palace.

To the south of this is the Maidan-i-Sarbaz Khaneh or "Barrack Square." It serves as a parade ground. The barracks surround it on three sides, by a long row of small rooms, while on the fourth side are three tiers of rooms, and over these can be seen the towers of the palace. This maidan is four hundred and eighty feet long, and two hundred and fifty-two feet wide. There are one hundred and twenty-eight rooms in the barracks.

Close to the barracks is the Chehar Bagh, where a garden was planted in imitation of the Chehar Bagh of Isfahan. The plane trees have, however, been cut down, and the place is going to ruin.

Naming houses after a favourite wife is a custom of the East adopted by so many in high places, Dil Kusha or "Heart's Delight" being one frequently seen. There is a mansion bearing this title in Kermanshah from

where a delightful view of the plain and the Behistun Hills can be obtained. It is said that a former Shah searched in many parts to find a worthy place in which to build a home for his beautiful and favourite wife. At last he came to this delightful eminence, overlooking the extensive valley of Kermanshah as far as the eye could reach to the distant mountain ranges. He set to work a host of builders, labourers and gardeners and soon had erected a fine mansion. He caused the rivulets from the adjacent hills to flow through the grounds in several directions making fountains in ornamental basins and bathing pools. The grounds were laid out in pleasant designs and walks, and a terrace made overlooking the valley below. When all was ready, he escorted the lady to her new home, with all the pomp and ceremony so dear to Eastern people. Mounted on a gaily caparisoned camel, with a bodyguard of pennant-bearing horsemen and preceded with musicians and numerous dancing girls throwing flowers, she entered in state, and never departed from it again. The house to-day is desolate and crumbling to decay, but the Royal arms of Iran (Lion and the Sun) are decipherable over one or two porticos.

The bazaars of Kermanshah are spacious, and carry on a good trade in grain, wheat, barley, and gum. They are well stocked with European goods. Kermanshah was once famous for its rugs or carpets, but the trade has fallen off considerably. The Kurdish carpets used to come from this neighbourhood, and were woven in the tents or in the open air by women on a frame of rude stakes fixed in the ground. In cereals, the province of Kermanshah is one of the richest in Iran, more grain being cultivated here than can be consumed in the district.

Silver work with pretty carving is also done in the bazaars, and the articles sold by the miscal (twenty-four grains). Scenes from Tak-i-Bostan are usually carved on the trays.

The population of Kermanshah is 60,000 and by far the greater proportion are Kurds. The Kurds here, have completely abandoned both their national instincts and national dress, and are often mistaken for Iranians. Besides the Kurds, there are Iranians and Jews, a few Turks, and Christians.

The climate of Kermanshah is healthy. The water-supply is plentiful, but the people are subject to diarrhoea, and dysentery. The usual illnesses are fever, small-pox and diphtheria.

There are four hotels in Kermanshah—the Hotel Bristol, the Grand Hotel, the Hotel Helal and the Hotel de l'Europe. The Hotel Bristol is the best and most comfortable, and next to it the Grand Hotel. The others should not be patronised. Close to the Hotel Bristol is a shop where spare parts for Dodge motor cars can be obtained. There are numerous caravanserais and public baths.

The town is the seat of a British Consulate, the Consulate having been established in 1904. There is also a custom-house in the hands of Belgian administration, and a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran, and a post and telegraph office.

On the Kara Su, about three miles from the town, is a villa called the Vakiliéh. It belonged to the Wakil-ud-Dowleh who had a bridge thrown over here. It is a favourite picnic spot for the people.

Towards the south of the town are numerous fruit trees and poplars.



RUINS OF QASR-I-SHIRIN.

By kind permission of the Iran League.



A MAGIAN PRIEST—DUKKHAN-I-DAWOOD

CHAPTER XXVIII

FROM KERMANSHAH TO QASR-I-SHIRIN

BEFORE leaving Kermanshah for Qasr-i-Shirin, passes are required from the Nazmieh, and passports have to be produced at the toll barrier. Unless one goes for a joy-ride, luggage will be examined at the Customs Office.

After leaving Kermanshah, the road goes over billowy ground through the Mahidasht plain, said to be one of the finest and most fertile plains in Iran. It is seventy-two miles long by fifteen broad, and is irrigated throughout by a small stream swarming with turtles; eighteen miles west of Kermanshah, in the centre of the plain, is the village of Mahidasht at an elevation of 5,050 feet above the sea. The village is on the right bank of the Ab-i-Mark which is here spanned by a fine brick bridge. The village has about sixty houses, a few shops and a caravanserai built by Shah Abbas, about eighty yards square, which had been repaired about thirty years ago. The inhabitants of the village are nomads, spending their time in tents, the houses being let as lodgings for pilgrims to Kerbela. Not far from the village is the truncated cone of Goree, a seat of the ancient fire-worship.

The Nal Shikan Pass is next crossed, twenty-five miles south-west of Kermanshah, at an elevation of 5,440 feet. It is two and a half miles in length, but the gradients are easy. The descent is down a valley. A few miles later on, at the range of hills that bound the Mahidasht plain to the south, the Garden-i-Chehar Zabar is crossed. The pass is above the torrent of the same name, the torrent running through a picturesque glen with a village and flour mills. The pass is thirty miles south-west of Kermanshah at an elevation of 5,590 feet. It is about two and a half miles long, but the hills on either side rise several hundred feet above it. The exit on the south side is about fifty yards broad.

After several ascents and descents through dreary country, about thirteen miles from Harunabad, and to the north-east of two villages, is the Tang-i-Shawan, elevation 5,550 feet. The Zabari plain is here pierced by a narrow gorge. The hills rise steeply on either side. The road is good, the gradients easy, and the length is about three hundred yards. At the south-west entrance to the pass, situated on the Zabari plain, are two villages. The villages are a quarter of a mile apart, and the road passes between the villages. Below are vineyards and orchards. The villages contain about forty to fifty houses.

Harunabad is next passed. It is at an altitude of 4,800 feet, and is a village of sixty houses. It occupies the site of a town built by Haroun-el-Raschid on the upper waters of the Kerkhah. It has a very large caravanserai, and a good kava khaneh where refreshments can be obtained. It has the reputation of being one of the coldest places in Iran, so cold that its Iliat inhabitants desert it in the winter.

From Harunabad, the road goes over a slope, through hill and dale, passes the small village of Khoshruabad which is inhabited by Karindi Kurds, and gets to Karind, altitude 5,380 feet. Karind, the capital of the Karind Kurds, is fifty-six miles west of Kermanshah, and is most picturesquely situated in and around a narrow gap at the mouth of the gorge between two precipitous hills. In this gap or jaw rise one above another, flat-roofed houses in terraces, with the naked rock rising abruptly over them. There are vineyards with the celebrated stoneless grape for which

Karind is famous, poplars, willows, fruit trees, walnuts and gardens. The Ab-i-Karind which rises in a plain, immediately behind, rushes through the village, bisecting it, and is afterwards divided into innumerable streamlets for the supply of the gardens in the plain.

The climate of Karind is very healthy, and the temperature is mild. A mild east wind prevails through the night followed by a gentle west wind during the day. Just after the great European War, a convalescent camp was established at Karind by the British Army. The British and Indian troops evacuated Karind in 1921.

Karind has been celebrated in Iran for the excellence of its steel work. The steel work is still excellent, but the carving on them is rather crude. Steel instruments for breaking lump sugar, or for turning baked bread, together with locks and keys are brought by the inhabitants on the road for the visitor, and sold very cheap. There are several mills in the town.

The population of Karind is about 3,000 souls, amongst whom there are a few Jews. There is an Iranian Post and Telegraph Office in the town. The old caravanserai of Shah Abbas is in ruins.

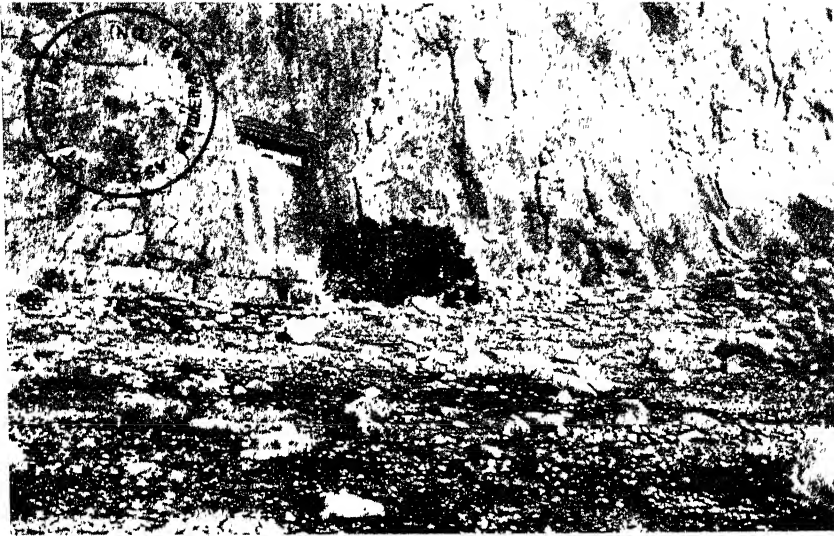
To the right of the road going down towards the Zagros Mountains is an excellent kava khaneh where very good food can be obtained.

After passing through Karind, the Karind Valley which is about twenty miles long, and from two to four broad, is next traversed. It is well irrigated and fertile, and is at an altitude of 5,800 feet. A short distance from the western end of the Karind plain are the ruins of the fort of Sar-i-Mil, anciently called Tur. They are situated at the edge of the plateau.

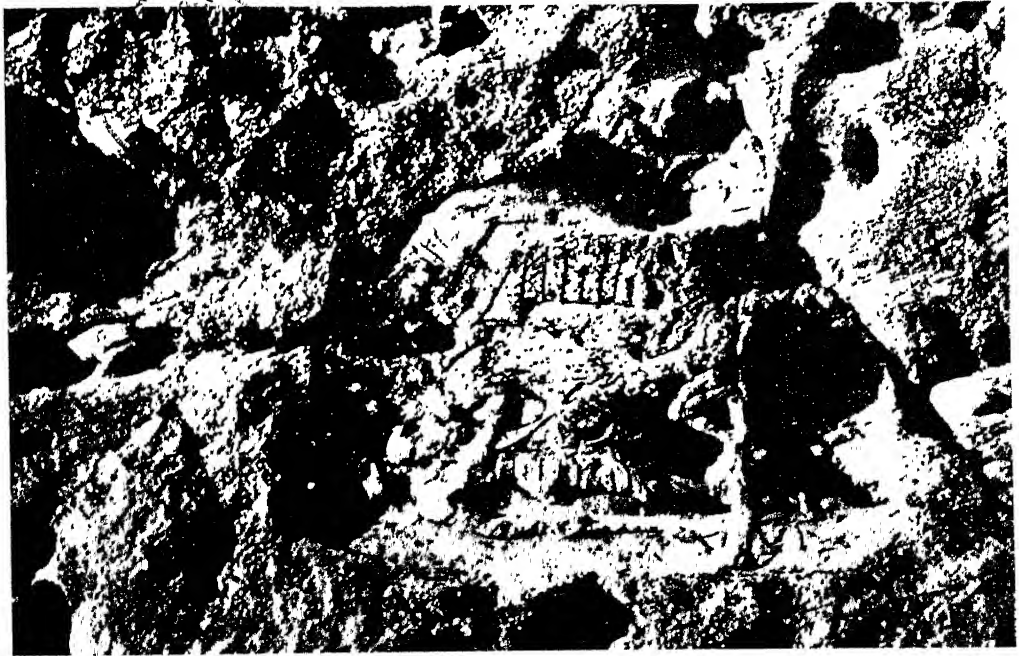
The little Kurdish hamlet of Mian Tak or Surkh Dizeh, elevation 4,280 feet, is next encountered. It is a village of about thirty houses, and contains a large stone and brick caravanserai built by Shah Abbas. There are a few gardens. The valley round about is covered with the "baloot" or dwarf oak. The village is situated near a mountain torrent among steep hills and small trees.

Four miles further on is the summit of the Pai-Tak or Tak-i-Girreh Pass, known to geographers as the Akabah-i-Holwan (the Defile of Holwan). Here the great Iranian plateau ends. This pass was also known as the "Gates of Zagros" and was on the ancient highway between Media and Babylonia. After crossing the pass, the road leads to the level alluvial plains of Babylonia and Assyria.

The great road zigzags down the pass, and round about it, are smooth boulders and natural rock. Soon after the descent is commenced, a recess called "The Tak-i-Girreh" (The Arch Holding the Road) is passed. It is this arch that gives the name of Gardan-i-Tak-i-Girreh to the pass. The origin of it is not known, but it is sometimes called the Tak-i-Khoshru, and may probably be attributed to the Sassanian King, Khushru Parviz. The ornaments of the marble slabs though very much defaced, are very like the style attributed to this king. Was it a dedicatory chapel announcing the completion of the road? The Sassanians took the greatest pains to keep the caravan road in good condition, and the road can still be seen. On the occasion of Nasr-ed-din Shah's journey to Kerbela, the Iranians under Gastiger Khan, who had been told to repair the road, abandoned the old Sassanian road, and adopted a new route.



DUKKHAN-I-DAWOOD.



INSCRIPTION OF ANNUBANINI, KING OF LULLABI, SAR-I-PUL.

From Herzfeld, "Am Tor Von Asiam."

The scenery now becomes grand ; the oak overspreads the sides of the mountains. On one side is the mighty Zagros range, and on the other the Band-i-Nuah chain. The road enters a narrow defile, and after taking several more turns, the wretched village of Pai Tak with the ruins of a bridge is passed, and then, close to the foot of the pass, is the caravanserai now in ruins built by Khushru Parviz. It is wholly covered in. Pai Tak village has about eighty families who live in huts made of reeds and branches of trees in the summer, and in houses of unhewn stone in the winter. Emerging from a narrow rift in the mountains we come to a flat alluvial plain. The road to Saripul Zohab goes to the right, the town being two and a half miles away, but before going there, it would be well to turn to the left to visit the Dukkhan-i-Dawood (the rift in the range being known as the Darreh-i-Daood). There is no motor road, but with care, a car can get to the foot of the range close to the cemetery. As it is situated only about a hundred yards to the left of the road, the place is easy to find. Here there is an abrupt range of limestone rock, with a natural rift, across which the foundations of a wall still remain.

Here above the cemetery, and in the rock is a sculptured tablet described by Rawlinson and Layard, on which a High Priest of the Magi is represented with one hand raised in benediction, and the other grasping a scroll, the dress being the pontifical robe worn by the Zoroastrian priests, with a square cap pointed in front, and lappets covering the mouth.

Above this is a tomb with an ornamented entrance, but inaccessible. It is called the Dukkhan-i-Dawood or David's Shop, and the people believe that he dwells there. He is said to work as a smith, and to make suits of fine armour. A part of the tomb divided from the rest by a low partition is believed to be a reservoir, containing the water which he used for tempering his metal.

On the right of the road, near this gorge is a great mound with a building in the centre which is called by the people "David's Fort."

Very little is known of the ancestry or beliefs of the people who live here. They are known as Ali-Ilahis, and are called by the Europeans "Davidites," on account of their veneration for King David. They have a strong Jewish physiognomy, and possess Jewish names. A Hebrew traveller of the twelfth century believed that these were Jews, and writes of one hundred synagogues in the Zagros Mountains, and of 50,000 Jewish families in the neighbourhood. The Ali-Ilahis believe in 1001 incarnations of the Godhead. All that changes is the bodily form of the Divine manifestation, there being degrees in the perfection of development.

Practically the speculations involved in the creed of successive incarnations are unknown, and the Imam Ali is the great object of worship. They are, however, detested by Mahomedans, and they lie under the stigma of practising unholy rights as a part of their religion. They have also got the name of "Chiragh Sonderan" or "Putters Out of Lights."

Retracing our steps back to the pass, we now take the road to the right to the village of Sar-i-Pul Zohab, but before crossing the Holwan River, a track to the right should be taken to the mountains. Ancient inscriptions, much defaced and almost indecipherable, are to be seen there, among which is the tablet of Annubanini, King of Lullabi.

In the gorge of Sar-i-Pul Zohab is a bas-relief, probably Parthian. The monument represents a Parthian King, mounted on horseback and receiving

a chaplet at the hand of a subject. The King wears a cap bound round with the diadem, the long ends of which depend over his shoulder. His tunic is close fitting and he wears loose trousers which hang down upon his boots, and a cloak fastened under his chin and reaching to the knee. The horse is small, but the tail is long, and its mane plaited. The back of the other man is turned and the legs are in profile; one arm is short, and the head is placed too near the left shoulder.

The Holwan is next crossed by a four-arched bridge. The river is shallow and fordable, but swift and full of fish. On its right bank is the miserable village of Sar-i-Pul Zohab, elevation 2,080 feet. The village is built on a portion of the site of the ancient city of Holwan, of which there are a number of remains about. The village has a good caravanserai.

This was once the Calah of Asshur, and the Halah of the Israelitic captivity, and gave to the surrounding country the name of Chalmitis. Being a Metropolitan see in the fifth century A.D. after the institution of the Nestorian hierarchy it was called Calaj, Kalah and Holwan.

From Sar-i-Pul to Qasr-i-Shirin is a short journey, but before getting into Qasr-i-Shirin, passports are examined. The palace of Khoshru Parviz is passed on the right.

The village of Qasr-i-Shirin is at an elevation of 2,300 feet, and has a population of about 2,000 inhabitants. It is situated high up on the right bank of the Holwan, with a plantation of date trees on the left bank. A caravanserai, a square fort with a small garrison, and a graveyard with domed tombs is all that there is in the village. There is a Customs Department under Belgian administration, and a severe examination both on the incoming and outgoing journeys is done here. The bazaar is small, and consists chiefly of food sellers.

On a hill to the south of the town is a great building resembling a mediæval castle. It was built by the robber chief Jan Mir, who was the terror of the neighbourhood. It contains great dark vaulted rooms with stone-flagged floors. The castle used to be occupied by the Governor of the town.

Across the river are two gardens, one built by Nasr-ed-din Shah at the time of his pilgrimage to Kerbela, and one planted by Jan Mir. About a mile to the north of the town is another garden, constructed by a Qazi, who was strangled there afterwards.

There are oil springs at Chia Surkh, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company have built houses in the town. There is also a post and telegraph office here.

The castle of Shirin, built by Khoshru Parviz, lies among masses of ancient rubble, and the slopes are completely covered with hewn and unhewn stones of all sizes, the remains of a great city. The walls are easily traced, and enclose a square which is said to be about three miles long. They are built of grey and red sandstone and mortar or concrete.

Within this square are houses built of stone, and a large fort on an eminence. In another direction are the ruins of an immense palace of quadrangular form, with only one entrance, and large underground rooms nearly choked up. There are remains of archways, but the outer coat has completely disappeared, and only the inner coat of rough rubble and concrete is left. The remains of an aqueduct cut in the rock, and of troughs

and stone pipes by which water was brought into the palace and the city from a distance of fifteen miles can still be traced, but there are no signs of the gardens now. This is all that remains of the palace built by Khushru Parviz for his wife Shirin, "a dismal commentary on splendour and fame." It was originally surrounded by an immense park of about three hundred acres, containing isolated villas. The remains of a stronghold occupied by the garrison can still be traced. The rooms of the palace are vaulted. The edifices are made of rubble, and round stones embedded in plaster. The columns are of brick and plaster, hence the rapid dilapidation of these buildings.

About half a mile from these ruins are another group called the Haush Khuri (Farm of the Stable). The people suppose that these were the stables of the palace. This is an error, for these ruins formed a complete palace.

CHAPTER XXIX

FROM KERMANSHAH TO DIZFUL VIA NEHAVEND AND BURUJIRD

THE road from Kermanshah to Nehavend goes via Behistun and Kangavar. From Kangavar the road to Malayer branches off to the south-east. After going $1\frac{1}{2}$ farsakhs¹ along this road, the Nehavend road branches off suddenly to the south, and passes the little village of Godi. Another two hours' drive leads to Nehavend, a good motor road most of the way.

From the days of the Sassanians, the plain of Nehavend has played an important part in history. Here was decided the fate of Iran. It was here that Yezdezird III (Isdigerd III), encouraged by the removal of a leader that he so much dreaded, assembled an army of 150,000 men from the provinces of Khorassan, Rhey and Hamadan, and placing it under the command of Firouzan, the bravest of the Iranian Generals, resolved to put the fate of his Empire at stake on one great battle.

The Caliph Omar when he heard of these preparations ordered reinforcements to be sent to his army in Iran from every quarter of his dominions; and committing the whole to the chief command of Noman, he directed that leader to exert his utmost efforts to destroy for ever the impious worship of fire. The Arabian force assembled at Kufa, and from thence marched to the plains of Nehavend. The Iranian Army had established a camp here surrounded by a deep entrenchment. For two months, these great armies opposed each other, and many skirmishes were fought. The Iranian General was determined not to quit his position, and the Mussalman General got impatient of delay. He drew up his army in order of battle, and thus addressed them: "My friends, prepare yourselves to conquer, or to drink of the sweet sherbet of Martyrdom. I shall now call the Tükbir three times; at the first you will gird your loins; at the second, mount your steeds, and at the third, point your lances and rush to victory or to Paradise. As for me," said Noman, "I shall be a martyr! When I am slain, obey the orders of Hazeefah-ibn-Aly Oman." When he had finished speaking, the first sound of Tükbir was heard throughout the camp. At the second, all were upon their horses; and at the third, which was repeated by the whole army, the Mahomedans charged with an irresistible fury. Noman was slain, but his army gained the victory. Thirty thousand Iranians were pierced by their lances, and 80,000 more were drowned in the deep trench by which they had surrounded their camp. Firouzan with four hundred men fled to the hills, but was pursued, defeated, and slain by a body of not more than 1,000 men.²

Such was the battle of Nehavend, fought in A.D. 642, which decided the fate of Iran. From this date Iran fell under the dominion of the Arabian Caliphs. Yezdezird III (Isdigerd III) protracted for several years a wretched existence. He first fled to Seistan, then to Khorassan, and lastly to Merv. The Governor of that city invited the Khakan of the Tartars to take possession of the person of the fugitive monarch. That sovereign accepted the offer; his troops entered Merv, the gates of which were opened to them by the treacherous Governor, and made themselves masters of it in spite of the desperate resistance of the inhabitants. During the confusion, Yezdezird escaped on foot from the town. He reached a mill eight miles from Merv, and entreated the miller to shelter him. The man told him he owed

¹ One farsakh = about four miles.

² Sir John Malcolm, "History of Persia."

a certain sum to the owner of the mill, and that if he paid the debt, he should have his protection against all pursuers. The monarch agreed, and after giving his sword and belt as pledges of his sincerity, he retired to rest with perfect confidence in his safety. But the miller could not resist the temptation of making his fortune by the possession of the arms and robes of the prince. He severed his head from his body with the sword he had received from him, and then threw his corpse into the water channel that turned the mill. Yezdezird, weak as he was unfortunate, sat on the throne only nine years, that being the period from his accession to the battle of Nehavend. From the battle of Nehavend to his death in A.D. 652, a period of ten years, he was a fugitive and had no power whatsoever. He was the last sovereign of the House of Sassan, a dynasty which ruled Iran four hundred and fifteen years; and his memory is still cherished by the Parsis of India, in preference to Ardeshir, Shapur or Anushirwan, who really did more for the House of Sassan than he had ever done.

To complete the sequel. The Governor of Merv, and others who had aided him, began to tire of the tyranny of the Khakan, and to repent the part which they had acted. They encouraged the citizens to rise upon the Tartars; and not only recovered the city, but forced the Khakan to flee with great loss to Bokhara. A diligent inquiry was made after Yezdezird, whose fate was soon discovered. The ruffianly miller fell a victim to popular rage; and the corpse of the monarch was embalmed and sent to Istakhr to be interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

In 1602, Nehavend was again the scene of a great battle. Shah Abbas the Great, who had till then done his best to preserve peace with the Emperor of Constantinople, Mohammed III, did not dare to think himself Shah of Iran, while the Turkish monarch held the fort of Nehavend in one quarter of his dominions, and the cities of Tabriz and Tiflis, with almost the whole of Azerbaijan and Georgia, in another. He commenced a war against Mohammed III by an attack on Nehavend, which he took, and whose fortifications he levelled to the ground.

At the present day Nehavend is a small village of about 12,000 souls, situated thirty-six miles west of Burujird, and forty-five miles south of Hamadan. It is built at the foot of the north-east range of hills upon some craggy points. The citadel, now in ruins, crowns the top of the highest of the craggy points on which the place is built, and is supported by an immensely solid mud wall from without, rising at least a hundred feet high. Excavations were taking place here during the time of my visit.

The streets of Nehavend are narrow but, on the whole, clean. The bazaars are open, and, outside the walls, like the houses. The town has four caravanserais, five mosques, schools and public baths. The main trade is in country woollen material. Any amount of Sassanian and Roman coins and seals are found in the excavations near by. Some curious seals were shown to me with a peculiar writing on them, which I was informed was not writing but symbols. Later on, I came to know that these seals were forgeries, manufactured in Hamadan. Roman gold coins have also been found here, but many of the antiquities are got from a place called Gian, eight miles away. The trade of these antiquities is entirely in the hands of Jews, who do not hesitate to charge exorbitant prices for the same.

There are five gardens in Nehavend, and water is plentiful and there is also an Iranian Government Telegraph Office here. There is no hotel for the traveller, but a garage on the western side of the town where accommodation can be had.

The road from Nehavend to Burujird, a distance of thirty-six miles, is bad for the first twenty-six miles, but passable for cars. A new alignment was being made.

Burujird, situated at an elevation of 5,400 feet, is a walled town surrounded by a ditch. In olden times, it bore a very bad reputation. Here a young English officer was robbed of his tents and horses, and everything but the clothes he wore. The town was in a state of unrest from 1909 to 1912. In 1911 the Lurs rose against Mustasir-ud-Dowleh, the Governor-General, because the latter had executed a relative of the Lur Chiefs. The town was also the scene of fighting during Salar-ud-Dowleh's rebellion of 1911. During 1911-12, the telegraph wires were so frequently cut that communication with the town was completely interrupted.

Burujird, situated in the extreme north-eastern corner of the Bakhtiari country, in a valley watered by the upper springs of the Ab-i-Diz, is to-day an important place. It is connected by motor routes with the best agricultural and commercial regions of Iran, to the north, east and west by easy roads never snow-blocked. It is only a hundred and thirty miles from Kermanshah, ninety miles from the fertile district which surrounds Hamadan, sixty miles from Sultanabad, the carpet-producing region of Western Iran, one hundred and forty miles from Qum, about two hundred and thirty miles from Teheran, and three hundred and ten miles from Ahwaz.

The town is situated in an exceptionally fine agricultural district, whose orchards are renowned for their fruits. The pasturage is magnificent, and the soil produces two crops a year. All cereals flourish. Wheat and barley ripen in July. Grapes, of which there are seven kinds, ripen in August and September. Water-melons, musk-melons, tobacco, maize, gourds and cucumbers, beans, brinjals, peas, flax, oil-seeds, rice, cotton, apricots, walnuts, pomegranates and peaches testify to the excellence of the soil and climate.

The town is surrounded by a mud wall five miles in circumference pierced by seven gates.

The bazaars of Burujird are large, bright, and well supplied with European goods: Russian and English cottons in enormous quantities, Russian mirrors, *samovars*, tea-glasses, tea-trays, Russian sewing cotton and woollen cloth, Russian china, and sugar-loaves, Austrian kerosene lamps and American lamps and sewing machines. The exports are opium, almonds and gum tragacanth.

Iranian manufactures are represented by heavy cottons dyed and stamped at Isfahan; carpets, saddles, copper cooking utensils, kalians, shoes of all makes, travelling trunks, oil jars, clay bowls, glazed with a green glaze, pistols, long knives, and tools. Burujird was once renowned for a species of printed calico on which fancy designs were stamped by means of hand dies cut in wood, but they are now imported from Isfahan. The bazaars are thriving. Woollen goods, and the best arrack to be found in Iran, are to be manufactured here.

The most prominent building visible from a distance, and covered with what seems a golden dome, is the tomb of Agha Sayed Mohammed. On closer inspection, it is found that what looks like a golden dome is really a dome covered with tin. The tin rusts during the rains, giving to the dome a golden appearance from a distance. Close to the gateway leading to the Malayer road, another tomb of the same description is encountered, and is the tomb of the Imamzadeh Haji Mirza Mohammed.



THE FORT—KHURRAMABAD.

There are six large mosques in the town, the largest being the Masjid-i-Shah, an imposing structure with a blue top forming an isosceles triangle instead of the usual dome. There are a number of Madrassahs and six caravanserais, which are entered through the bazaars.

There are three garages, the best one being right in the centre of the town close to a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran. Good food can be obtained here.

Burujird in 1929 was made the headquarters of the new German company that is building a railway in northern Iran.

The traveller who proceeds to Khurramabad need not pass through the town. The main road skirts the town outside the walls.

After leaving Burujird, the road goes through a fertile plain, the plain of Silakhor. This very rich plain, about thirty miles long by from six to eight miles broad, has been described as "waterlogged," and the level of the water is only a foot below the surface. Numerous streams rise along the hill slopes, and flow down into the plain, which is singularly flat. Villages are scattered over it, many of them being raised on artificial mounds, as a protection from the robber Lurs, and also to avoid the miasma of the rice-fields. It is watered by many streams, which flow into the Burujird River, and the Kamand-i-Ab which uniting, leave the plain by the magnificent Tang-i-Bahrain. On the south-eastern side is the Shuturun Kuh, and on the other side lies the town of Burujird, the neighbourhood of which is well planted. Most of the plain, however, is devoid of trees.

The scenery abruptly changes at the end of the plain. The tall grass of the rich marshy pastures; the brown villages on mounds contrasted with the vivid green of the young rice, the dark greenery round, gives way to buff treeless mountains. The charm of the whole is the contrast between the "dry and thirsty land where no water is, and abundant moisture; between the scanty and scorched herbage of the arid mountains, and the trees planted by the rivers of water."

In the plain, a few miles after leaving Burujird, a solitary ziarat is seen with a dome covered with tin. It is the tomb of the Imamzadeh Sultan Ahmed. Close by are numerous graves with carvings of men on horseback, etc., evidently the graves of Shiahs.

Leaving the village of Chulanchulan, a branch of the Ab-i-Diz is crossed by a fine bridge, and the road enters the mountains. From now onwards to Khurramabad and Dizful, visitors' passes are constantly inspected by the road guard, and guards patrol the mountain passes. The road is a military road, and no one is allowed to travel between the hours of sunset and sunrise. Caravans have to stop at 2 p.m. and cars at sunset. There are blockhouses all the way. This is the country of the fierce and undisciplined tribes of the Feili Lurs, and on this very road, close to Khurramabad, an Amir-i-Lashkar was killed in 1928. In addition to blockhouses, there are Amniyeh¹ posts and caravanserais all along the road.

The road winds up and down the mountains to a height of 7,200 feet, and then descends 1,000 feet to Zagheh, and ascending again to 7,000 feet, among large formless hills, comes down to 4,088 feet at Khurramabad.

The entrance into Khurramabad is most imposing. It is entered by a bridge over the Khurramabad River, eighteen feet wide, and nine hundred feet long, with twenty-eight pointed arches of solid masonry. To the right of the bridge is a magnificent parade ground for the troops, to the left are

¹ Road guards.

gardens. In the distance, a solitary rock rises, in the jaws of a pass opening upon a rich plain. At its foot is the modern town, containing about 3,000 inhabitants or more. Its summit is crowned by a fort, originally a castle of the Atabegs, which stands up with gloomy outline, like some robber stronghold on the Rhine. Crossing the bridge, on the left is a big garage and caravanserai where visitors can spend the night. The whole town is hemmed in with a striking range of rocky mountains, and the Yafta Kuh in the distance.

Khurramabad before the fourteenth century was called the Diz-i-Siyah or the Black Fort, and was the capital of the Atabegs of Luristan who ruled from A.D. 1155 to about A.D. 1600. When the Arabs overran Iran, Khurramabad became an important place, and it was from here that their religious propaganda spread over Luristan. They constructed two roads, one north and south to Burujird and Dizful, and the other to Hulilan and Kermanshah.

In the old days, Pish Kuh and Pusht-i-Kuh, and a considerable amount of surrounding territory were united under the rule of the Atabegs. Their dominion was counted by Marco Polo as one of the eight kingdoms of Iran. The Lurs were well known as thieves and bandits, and Mangu Khan, the brother of Hulagu Khan, when he commissioned his brother to the Government of Iran, gave him particular instructions "to make things uncomfortable for the Kurds and Lurs," in revenge for their plundering on the high roads. In A.D. 1386 Timur took Khurramabad and Burujird, chiefly on account of the Lurs looting the Mecca caravans. The last of the dynasty, Shah Vardi Khan, was seized by Shah Abbas and put to death. The title of Atabeg was suppressed, and a new title of Vali of Luristan was conferred upon one Hussein Khan, who had risen to some distinction in the service of Shah Vardi Khan.

In 1810, Captain Grant and Lieut. Fotheringham who were sent out by Sir J. Malcolm as his pioneers were murdered at Khurramabad by Kelb Ali Khan, a Chief of the Vali's family. In 1836 Sir H. Rawlinson marched through the Feili country with a detachment of Iranian troops, and he was followed a few years later by Layard. Hussein Khan died in 1840, and was succeeded by the youngest of his three sons. At the present day, Khurramabad is the capital of the Feili Lurs, and the residence of the Governor of Luristan, also known as the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh. The present town is on the right bank of the Khurramabad River, the old town being on the left.

The most prominent object in Khurramabad is the Bala Hissar, its pile of ancient buildings crowning the steep mass of naked rock. This fort contains within its walls, the Vali's Palace, and other buildings, and a fine reservoir of one hundred and seventy-eight feet by one hundred and eighteen feet. The water is supplied by a deep shaft sunk into the rock to a rigorous spring below. The castle is surrounded by a wall which had twelve towers, only six of which remain now. At the foot of the rock are the barracks.

The bazaars and the streets of the Khurramabad of to-day are quite different from the gloomy picture painted by Mrs. Bishop¹ and endorsed by Lord Curzon, nearly forty years ago. The bazaars are open and airy with plenty of light, and most things can be purchased there including khaki cloth and, as in Savajbulagh, braces made from the Victory Medal riband. The town is clean, and the roads are broad, especially the Khia-ban-i-Pahlavi, the main street of the town. There is a big pond in the centre of the city.

¹ Mrs. Bishop, "Travels in Persia and Kurdistan."

Khurramabad has practically no industries. It is the chief market to which the Lurs bring their wool, which they exchange for cartridges, etc. Iranians are seen engaged in making and repairing rifles, and in manufacturing the necessary articles of daily life. Rice in small quantities, wheat and barley are cultivated round Khurramabad. Fruits and vegetables of all kinds and of good quality are found in great abundance.

In the gardens by the river, south-east of the fort are some remains of the walls and towers of the ancient Atabeg capital, and there are also ruins of an aqueduct with a high stone wall, and of an ancient bridge, of which ten arches are still standing, and many walls of smaller buildings. The most interesting relic, however, is a quadrangular brick tower sixty feet high in fairly good preservation, with a Cufic inscription round the top. The inscription bears the date A.D. 1123. The other interesting relic is a large square monolith, about nine feet high by seven and a half feet by six feet, covered with Naksh and Cufic inscriptions. It is said to rest on a truncated pyramid eight feet high. The Muzaffar-ul-Mulk had caused a large portion of the Cufic inscription to be obliterated on one of the faces, and had it replaced by an inscription in Naksh, setting forth how he, under the Zil-es-Sultan, was Governor of Lûristan.

The Cufic inscription has not been translated. Time has gone, and stories have been made up about the stone and the ruined city. I was told that sixteen steps have been discovered which led under the Khurramabad River towards the castle, which is quite probable. On close inquiry about the inscription, an educated man told me that on the stone was written "Sang barabar zar, zar barabar sang ast" (Stone is the same as gold, and gold is like the stone), which has given rise to the supposition that there is hidden treasure somewhere!

The site of Khurramabad has been occupied from very ancient times. Chaldean cylinders, medals, etc., are found constantly. South of the town, on the plain, are many artificial mounds. De Morgan thinks that these mounds represent the Khaidalu of the Assyrian texts, where the Elamite King took refuge after the capture of Madaktu.

The population of Khurramabad is about 2,000 inhabitants.

Nine miles west of Khurramabad is the Yafta Kuh, a precipitous and rocky mass, about two hundred feet above the Pusht-i-Kuh road. It runs along the north of the road in a parallel row of cliffs. The summit is wooded and grassy, and contains springs of good water.

From Khurramabad to Dizful is entirely a military road, there being 178 blockhouses in a distance of one hundred and sixty miles. The road is only open from sunrise to sunset. Soon after leaving Khurramabad, the Kashgan River is crossed by a good bridge on stone piers. The village of Madian Rud is left in the distance, and the road now goes south along the banks of the Kashgan River. The river flows at first in a broad valley, wooded and grassy. The banks are lined with grassy plateaux, and tamarisks. The hills rise on either side, and are well wooded and grassy. After about an hour's run along the banks of the river, the road enters a defile, the Tang-i-Gav Shumar. The river flows through the gorge with high mountains on either side. The road goes along its left bank. On the right bank of the river, the ruins of an old bridge, the Pul-i-Kulhar, is passed. The Pul-i-Kulhar is spanned in one great arch, over a picturesque rocky pass. The road was carried up to a great height, partly in the form of steps hewn in the rock and partly over arches fastened to the rocks. There are signs of several restorations. The most recent of these is dated A.H. 374 from two inscriptions carved in the rock at both ends of the bridge. The inscriptions

are "In the name of Allah. This was built under the order of the very mighty Chief (Governor) Abu'l Majm Badr, son of Kasanol, son of Husein; may Allah prolong his life, longing for Allah's recompense. This is the might and the Lordship, in the year 374. May Allah reward him for it." Nearly half-way between Khurramabad and Dizful on the left bank of the river under which the main road passes is another bridge, known as the Pul-i-Dukhtar. It is a bridge supposed to have been built by Shapur I, the son of Ardeshir Babegan, the founder of the Sassanian Empire. The rapid current of the Kashgan has undermined and swept away the greatest part of it, notwithstanding the solidity of its construction; still enough remains to show what a splendid structure it must have been when entire, for the bridges near Arrejan, which Ibn Batuta described as the wonder of the world, can hardly compete with the massive buttresses of this bridge of Shapur. The bridge in its lower part is Sassanian, in its upper part Islamic.

Soon after leaving the Pul-i-Dukhtar, the road leaves the hills, and follows the Kashgan River south-west through the plain of Jaider. The meadow of Jaider is watered by the Kashgan River which issues from a rocky cleft in the mountains, is lovely and green, while behind it are three successive ranges of hills, the Alwend range of mountains. Just below the gorge, through which the river enters the Jaider plain, the river spreads out, and divides itself into two branches. It then goes through the outer rampart of the Zagros into the valley of the Kerkhah.

After leaving the Kashgan, the road follows the left bank of the Kerkhah (the Choaspes of the ancient Greeks). The Kebir Kuh is seen on the right. The Ab-i-Zal is next crossed by a bridge. This river is interesting and it enters the Kerkhah three miles below where it is crossed on the road to Dizful. It is an impetuous torrent, full of rocks, and with excessive force of water, which is salt from the bed of gypsum which it traverses. The waters are of a pellucid clearness, hence its name. This river was on the caravan road, from Khurramabad to Arabistan, and it was here that Timur was supposed to have crossed by the bridge. The river has been bridged over several times, but only the bridge built by Muzaffar-ul-Mulk now remains. It was easier to put up new bridges than to renew old ones, and the remains of three lie close to each other. The best preserved might have been Sassanian: a parabolic arch spanned the cleft from side to side at the height of the surrounding land.

Later on, the Bala Rud is crossed by a very fine modern bridge and then another descent into the plains brings the traveller to Dizful. The Balah Rud joins the River Diz eleven miles below Dizful, and has a coarse shingly bed, with banks of conglomerate. There are still traces of Alexander's old road, a stone pavement, and the ruins of a five-arched bridge. Spanning the river at about thirty kilometres from Dizful is another ancient bridge (which can be seen from the roadway) made of solid masonry with a single archway, in all probability a Sassanian bridge of the time of Shapur.

I shall now proceed to give short descriptions of the Bakhtiari and the Feili Lurs and of the geography of Luristan.

Note.—An alternative route from Kermanshah to Khurramabad is via Chasmeh-i-Kabud, and takes a day and a half. The road is quite good, but infested with robbers. Between Khurramabad and Kermanshah, on the Kashgan River, is the Pul-i-Taskan, an old Sassanian bridge now in ruins.

CHAPTER XXX

LURISTAN

LURISTAN is bounded on the west by the frontier mountains of Pusht-i-Kuh, and beyond them, the Tigris plains, on the east by the borders of Isfahan and Fars, on the north by the districts of Kermanshah and Hamadan, and on the south by the plains of Arabistan. It has two divisions—the Lur-i-Kuchak inhabited by the Feili Lurs, and the Lur-i-Buzurg or Greater Luristan, also known as Bakhtiari Land, the two being separated from each other by the Ab-i-Diz.

The Lurs are a people without a history, and without a tradition. The majority of writers think that they are the veritable relics of the old Aryan or Iranian stock, who preceded the Arabs and Turks in the land. Rawlinson says that their language is derived from the old Farsi stock, which was coeval with but quite distinct from the Pehlavi language used in the times of the Sassanidas. They have lived from times immemorial in their mountain habitations. The word Feili means a rebel, while the word "Lur" is a synonym for a boor, applied by the modern Iranians who thoroughly detest them.

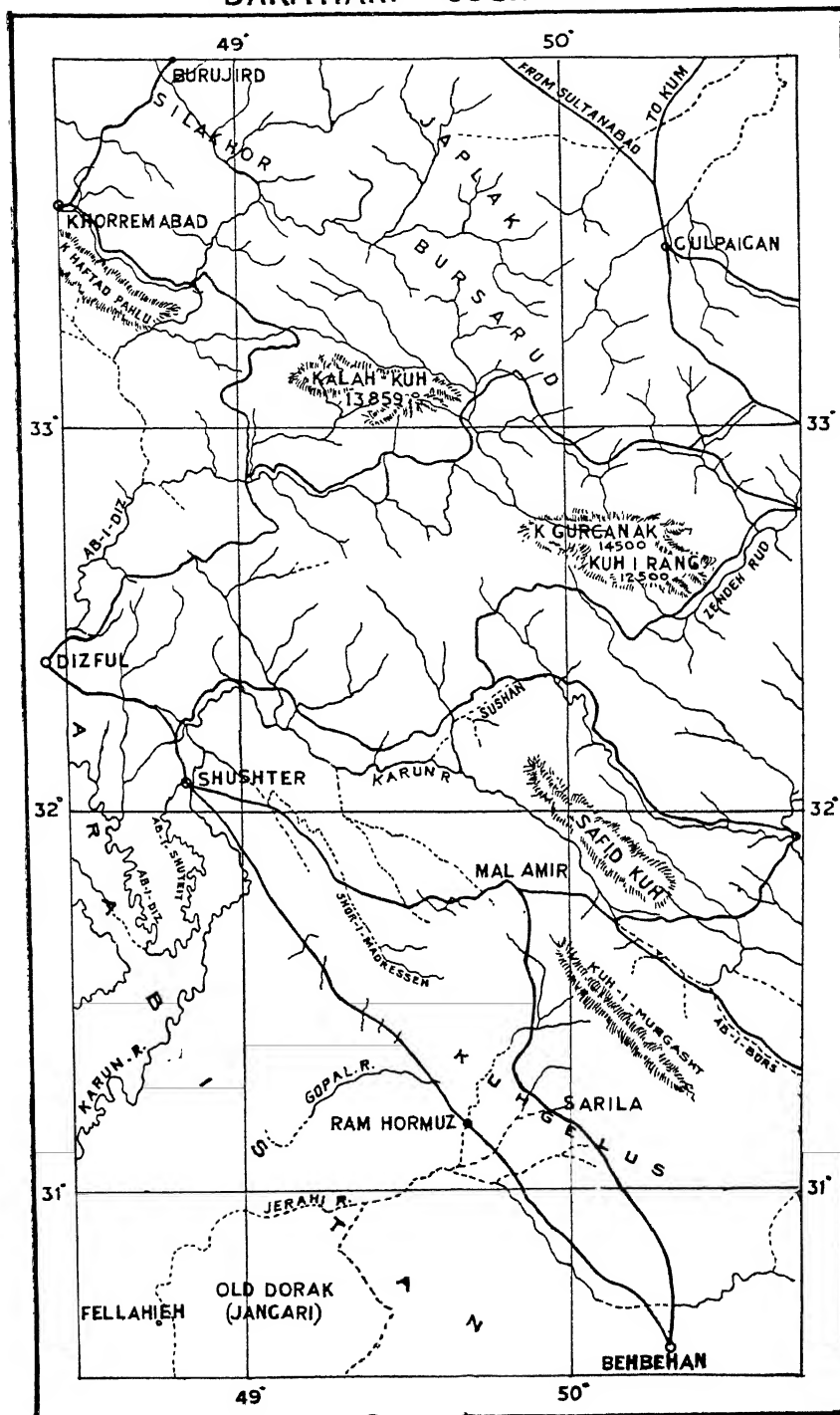
Lur-i-Kuchak or Lesser Luristan is bounded on the north by Kermanshah, on the south by Dizful, on the east by the Ab-i-Diz, and by the Iraq Frontier on the west. It is divided into Pish Kuh (in front of the mountains) the dividing range being that part of the Zagros Mountains known as the Kebir Kuh. Pish Kuh was taken away by Agha Mohammed Shah from the Vali of Luristan. Thus the Feili Lurs are those confined to the regions near the Pusht-i-Kuh.

Pish Kuh is the eastern portion of the Luristan province, bounded by the Bakhtiari country on the east and south, and by the River Kerkhah on the west. It is under the control of the Iranian Government, and is more sedentary than the mountain fastnesses in the west. The people are great robbers, and used to attack travellers on the Khurramabad-Dizful road.

The Pusht-i-Kuh district extends from the right bank of the Kerkhah to the Iraq border. The people are of a nomadic character, and their Chieftain used to be independent of the Central Government, and has the title of Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh.

The mountains of the Feili Lurs run in parallel file from north-west to south-east, projecting craggy masses of limestone frequently sawn at right angles to their own trend by the tengs through which the rivers force their way. In the valleys there is abundant water, and rich fodder for the flocks and herds of the nomad tribes. Sheep and goats are their principal wealth. The great river of North Luristan is the Kerkhah or the Chaospes; of Central Luristan, the Ab-i-Diz, and of Southern Luristan, the Karun. The origin of the Kerkhah is from three streams which rise in the neighbourhood of Hamadan and Burujird and unite in the plain of Kangavar and under the title of Gamasiab flow west past Behistun. The river thus formed is joined by the Abi-i-Dinawar, and turning south-west and south, receiving successively the Kara Su, the Ab-i-Chenara, the Kashgan, and the Ab-i-Zal, and after passing through magnificent scenery, breaks through the ramparts of the mighty Zagros range and passing within ten miles of Dizful, skirts the mounds of Susa, and is lost in the Hawizeh marshes. Its length

BAKHTIARI COUNTRY



is about five hundred miles. Formerly the Kerkhah had two outlets, one into the Tigris at Amara, and the other below Kurnah into the Shatt-el-Arab, but they are both dry now.

The Feili Lurs are smaller in stature than the Bakhtiari. They are addicted to polygamy, and are Shiah Mahomedans, but have very little respect for the Koran, and have Pirs or holy men, whose tombs are regarded as sacred places. The chief of these Pirs, Baba Bazurg or the Great Father, is buried in their country. Ali Ilahis are also to be found amongst them.

The females are unveiled, and are pretty when young, but get shrivelled and decayed after the age of about twenty-five. They lead a hard life tending and milking the flocks, pitching and striking tents, and weaving carpets. They live in the open under tents made of black goat's hair. The tents are of all shapes, and are supported by poles, and partitioned by carpets into separate chambers. Usually there are four chambers, an outer reception room, an inner quarter for the women, a quarter for sheep and goats, and a kitchen. In settled villages, mud huts take the place of tents. The men lead a life of ease, sowing and reaping corn, or smoking in their tents, or of robbing and fighting whenever opportunity occurs.

The Bakhtiari country extends to the north from Burujird to the outskirts of Isfahan, and on the south from Dizful and Shuster to Ram Hormuz, and the Behbahan district. Here there are mountain ranges from 8,000 to 13,000 feet in height, in which are the sources of great rivers, the Ab-i-Diz on the north, the Karun and Zindeh Rud to the south-east. Here there are rugged hills, mountain meres, rushing torrents and deep ravines; here are the yeilaks or summer quarters of the tribes. The people depend on pasturage for their livelihood; in the winter months, snow lies deep, and closes the passes against traffic; here also are a series of plateaux, mountain valleys and elevated plains from 2,000 to 6,000 feet in height. These heights are very fertile and well watered and inhabited all the year round, or are the winter resort of the nomads. On the north-east is the district of Silakhor; from there to Isfahan extends a plateau two hundred miles long by from forty to fifty miles in width, which includes the district of Feraghan. Here are many Georgian and Armenian families, former Mussalmans, and the latter Christians whose ancestors are reported to have been moved hither by Shah Abbas in 1614-15. To the south-east of this plateau lies the region of Chchar Mahal, full of Armenian villages under Bakhtiari rule.

On the hill slopes there is considerable amount of timber. Oak, ash, walnut, plane, elm, poplar, willow, ilex, beach, wild rose, briar, hawthorn, wild fig, maple, vine, hop, and almond are found here. To the same spots in the mountains come the same families in the summer, their piece of ground marked by white stones. Before they leave the place in the autumn, they sprinkle the seed in cultivated places, and find a good crop in the spring when they return.

As regards their history, very little of their origin is known. They have lived from earliest times in a wild and inaccessible region. They defied the authority of the Medes and Iranians. The Achæmenians and Sassanians used to pay them tribute to pass through their territory. They defied Alexander, and provoked Antiochus. Between A.D. 1155 and A.D. 1424 the powerful dynasty of the Fasluyah, under the name of Atabegs, ruled the Bakhtiari country from Isfahan to Shuster. Their stronghold was at Mungasht, and their winter quarters at Idej, near Mal Amir.¹

¹ Izeh.

In 1722, when the Afghans appeared outside Isfahan, Kasim Khan Bakhtiari put 12,000 horsemen in the field, but was defeated. Soon after, the Turkish Pasha of Mosul invaded the Bakhtiari country, and though successful was unable to hold it, and had to retreat. Nadir Shah conquered, but could not subdue them, and eventually ended by enlisting the Bakhtiaris in his army, who acquitted themselves with great bravery at Herat and Kandahar. He also tried to transport them to Khorassan, but without success. After the death of Nadir Shah, a Bakhtiari Chieftain became the virtual occupant of the Throne of Iran. Reshid Khan, who was in Isfahan at the time of Nadir's assassination, looted the place and fled to his native land, but returned again with his brother Ali Mardan Khan, at the head of an army, conquered Isfahan, and placed the nephew of Shah Sultan Hussain on the throne under the name of Shah Ismail III. Kerim Khan Zend acted as Minister, but real power was in the hands of Ali Mardan Khan who was Commander-in-Chief, and in charge of the army. In 1751, Ali Mardan Khan was assassinated.

In 1785, Agha Mohammed Shah led an expedition against the Bakhtiaris but was unsuccessful, and let them alone.

Early in the nineteenth century, Asad Khan of the Haft Lang tribe of the Bakhtiaris rebelled against the Iranian Government, raided up to the walls of Teheran, and when pursued took refuge in his mountain fortress. Ultimately, through the tact of Mohammed Ali Mirza, son of Feth Ali Shah, he submitted and made his peace with the Government.

When British officers appeared in Iran, a force of 3,000 Bakhtiaris was placed under Major Hart, who found them obedient to him, but insubordinate to the Iranian officers. Subsequently a Frenchman commanded a Bakhtiari regiment. A curious story is related of an Englishman who, in about 1830, having been captured by some Bakhtiari brigands, became domesticated, married among them, took the name of Derwesh Ali and lived as a Moslem. He ultimately grew tired of this life, and of his Bakhtiari wife, so he sold her for a jackass, which he rode to Trebizend and embarked thence for his native country!

There are two chief sub-divisions of the Bakhtiari tribes, the Haft Lang (Seven Feet) and Chehar Lang (Four Feet). The whole tribe was supposed to have originally migrated from Syria, under a single Chieftain, one of whose descendants left upon his death two families, of seven and four sons respectively, between whom a struggle for supremacy arose, which led to a tribal division ever since. Others say that the numbers of seven and four represented the respective scales of military contributions in by-gone days, the Haft Lang who were the poorer of the two were taxed in the proportion of one-seventh of their property, while the Chehar Lang, who possessed villages and were rich, were taxed upon a quarter of their possessions, and this led to bitter enmity between the two. Their pastures overlapped, and they crossed each other moving from their winter to their summer quarters. Between 1830 and 1840 Mohammed Teki Khan, a descendant of Rashid, the brother of the previously mentioned Ali Mardan Khan, of the Chehar Lang tribe, rose by his own abilities to a commanding position among the Bakhtiari people. He became Chief of the Chehar Lang, and even the Haft Lang, and some of the Feili Lurs owed allegiance to him. Mohammed Shah, who was then the Ruler of Iran, declared him a rebel in A.D. 1840, out of jealousy of his power and his supposed wealth, and sent an army against him, headed by the eunuch Minucheh Khan, Motamed-ed-Dowleh, who was then Governor of Isfahan, and had a reputation for merciless severity. He marched into Bakhtiari country in 1841, seized the family of Mohammed Teki Khan by a breach of faith;

Mohammed Teki Khan took refuge in the marshes with the Kab Sheikh Tamer, but was persuaded to surrender to the Motamed on a guarantee of safety, sworn upon the Koran. He was, however, seized, thrown into chains, and carried off to Teheran, where he died in imprisonment in A.D. 1851. His brother and sons shared the same fate. The whole story is graphically described in Layard's "Early Adventures." With the death of Mohammed Teki Khan, the fortunes of the Chehar Lang completely declined.

The second branch of the Bakhtiari tribe is the Heft Lang, who regained their supremacy after the fall of the Chehar Lang. Jaafar Kuli Khan was recognized as the Ilkhani by the Motamed. When engaged in hostilities with the Iranian Government, he withdrew to his impregnable fortress of the Diz, where he was unsuccessfully besieged. Later, he took to flight and was succeeded by Kelb Ali Khan. About the year 1850, Husain Kuli Khan, the son of Jaafar, began to assert his authority over the tribes. He slew Kelb Ali Khan, and remained in undisputed possession for thirty years. In 1882 he was invited by the Zil-es-Sultan to Isfahan, and was there either strangled or poisoned. His eldest son was thrown into prison where he remained for six years, after the fall of the Zil-es-Sultan.

There are three official posts associated with the leadership of the Bakhtiari tribe—the Ilkhani or Chieftain, the Ilbegi or Second-in-Command, and the Hakim or Governor of Chehar Mahal. In modern times, tribal disturbances between the two divisions do not exist, the Chehar Lang having intermarried with the Haft Lang. In the winter, the Khans and the people encamp in the plains about Shuster and Dizful. In the spring and autumn, their headquarters are at Ardal (altitude 6,000 feet) in the south-eastern portion of the Bakhtiari mountains.

Pasture is the chief occupation of the Bakhtiaris, and sheep and cows their principal source of wealth. Supply of mutton is conducted to the Isfahan market. Tobacco is grown in the plains towards Shuster and Dizful. The bulk of the tribes are poor, and except among the families of the Chiefs there is little or no education. Outwardly they are Mahomedans, but they care little for Mahomedanism, and worship the shrines of Pirs or departed saints. Their burial-places are unfenced, and on low mounds. A rough lion whereon are sculpted the sword, musket, dagger, etc., of the deceased, marks the tribesman's grave. They are modest, obedient and hospitable, faithful to family and tribal ties and free from vice; but when excited are very savage, and given to blood feuds. They are first-rate thieves. An idea of their adroitness in thieving can be got from the following story in Layard's "Early Adventures." Talking about the great French Architect, Monsieur Coste, Layard says: "On one occasion, I suggested to him to make a drawing of a finely carved capital of the Sassanian period, which I had discovered in one of my wanderings in an out-of-the-way part of the city. He rode off at once to do so. Dismounting, he seated himself on a stone, and passing his arm through his horse's reins, commenced his sketch. After finishing it he found to his surprise that his horse had disappeared. A thief had slipped the bridle off the animal's head, and had led it away, leaving the reins on the artist's arm. I went with him to complain of the theft to the Motamed, who burst into a fit of laughter when he heard the story. 'That must have been the work of a Bakhtiari,' he exclaimed, 'the most skilful and audacious of thieves. No one else could have imagined or executed such a trick.'"

The Bakhtiari is an expert rough-rider, able to fire while going at a gallop and perform feats on horseback. He is a fine shot from near ranges, and is very fond of the chase. His black hair has two uncut tufts behind

the ear. The men are robust and muscular, wear loose trousers and a skirted coat. They have a rifle slung over the shoulder, round the waist is a cart-ridge belt, a sword hangs under the saddle flaps, and they carry a dagger and pistol in the belt. The women are tall and dark, of shapely limbs, and erect carriage. They are not veiled, and wear Turkish trousers, a divided skirt, a loose chemise, and a shawl above all. Polygamy is the rule, but domestic happiness is common. The people are liable to disorders of the skin and eye, the latter exaggerated by the glare of the sun from rock and sand.

One of the natural features of the Bakhtiari country is that in this mountainous country there are hill forts known as Diz. They are isolated mountain or hill tops, artificially scarped and difficult of access, but have natural wells or springs, and pastures on the summits. They were in those days impregnable, and were a safe retreat for the rebel or the outlaw. The most remarkable are two in the neighbourhood of Shuster and Dizful. The Diz Asad Khan is sixty-four miles north-east of Shuster. It was also known as Diz Malekan or Fort of the Angels. Layard resided for several days upon its summit, and described it as a rock three miles round, and ascended by long ladders and holes in the cliff, conducting to a lower platform, while there were natural springs and a collection of huts, while the higher platform was attained by a precipitous climb.

The second Diz, known as Diz Shahi, in Layard's time was the property of Kelb Ali Khan, but on his assassination passed to Husain Kuli Khan. It is fifteen miles north-east of Dizful near the Ab-i-Diz, and consists of an elevated tableland, several miles in circumference, on the summit of a hill with perpendicular sides. A single pathway conducts to the top where are huts, caves, springs and food cultivation.

A third Diz is that of Mungasht, which was the stronghold of the Atabegs in the Middle Ages, and held out for nine months against the Mongol, Hulagu Khan. It was the fastness of Mohammed Teki Khan. It consists of a rock artificially scarped to a depth of a hundred and fifty feet, with a summit half a mile round containing perennial springs and natural caves, capable of accommodating a thousand men.

In the Mamaseni country is the famous Diz-i-Safid which will be described later on; and the Gul-i-Gulab, south of Behbahan.

In the north-west portion of the Bakhtiari Mountains, in the canon of Arjanak is a diz consisting of shallow caves piercing the perpendicular face of one of the cliff-walls of the valley. The largest of these, twenty feet long and twelve feet wide, is defended by a loophole parapet, and is accessible by a single steep path.

Flowers in the Bakhtiari country are innumerable in the months of May and June. The tulip, the iris, the narcissus, and a small purple gladiolus are common, and on the hill-side above at an altitude of 7,000 feet, there is a crimson and terracotta *Fritillaria imperialis*, and a carnation red anemone, while the margins of the snow-fields are gay with pink patches of an exquisite alpine primula. Chicory, the dark blue *Centaurea*, a large orange and yellow snap-dragon, and the scarlet poppy are found near grain crops. The slopes above the upper Karun have pink, mauve and white hollyhocks.

The *Centaurea atata* which grows at a height of from 5,500 to 7,000 feet, is cut and stocked for fodder; there is a species of celery which is used for food, and the flower stalks of which are woven into booths by

some of the tribes; the blue linum, red madder, the *Eryngium cœruleum* are also cut and stocked for fodder; the other economic plants are a purple garlic, the bulbs of which are eaten; the liquorice and the *Ferula asafoetida* in small quantities.

The only animals found are bears, boar, some small ibex, blue hare and jackals. The tendency of the Bakhtiari to shoot game has reduced the animals considerably. Francolin and storks are seen, but scarcely any other birds, and bees and butterflies are rare. Venomous snakes, venomous spiders, and stinging beetles are common, and so are black flies, mosquitoes and sand-flies.

The country is full of streams and torrents, but there are three rivers of importance. The Kuh-i-Rang is not only a great water-parting but indicates two distinct mountain systems with peculiarities of drainage, as well as a barrier between two regions which were called "Upper Elam" and "Bakhtiari country."

The ranges south-east of the Kuh-i-Rang are pierced by remarkable rifts or tengs for the passage of rivers—the outer range by the Tang-i-Ghazi, the outlet of the Zindeh Rud towards Isfahan, and the Tang-i-Darkash War-kash by which the drainage of the important districts of the Chehar Mahal passes to the Karun; the inner range is pierced at the Tang-i-Dupulan by the Karun itself. The three rivers that attain any size are the Zindeh Rud, which after passing through Isfahan, loses itself in a marsh; the Karun with its Bakhtiari tributaries, and the Ab-i-Diz which after a course of its own unites with the Karun at the Bund-i-Kir. These rivers are not navigable in Bakhtiari territory, and are spanned by bridges of stone or wickerwork.

The valleys are of considerable width. Among the limestone ranges, fountain springs are of frequent occurrence, gushing out of the mountainsides with great volume and impetuosity. The tracks follow the valleys. On the south-east of the Kuh-i-Rang there are easy gradients, but to the north-west, on account of the rivers piercing the ranges at right angles to their directions, ascents and descents of several thousand feet are involved at short intervals.

There are two tracks between Isfahan and Shuster, one crossing the God-i-Murda at a height of 7,050 feet and the Karun at Dupalan, and the other, the shorter of the two, crosses the Zard Kuh by the Cherri Pass at an altitude of 9,500 feet, and dropping down a steep descent of over 4,000 feet to the Bazuft River. These passes, together with three others which cross the Zard Kuh range at heights of over 11,000 feet, are closed by snow for several months during the winter.

The climate is healthy and medicinal plants abound. The hot weather lasts from June to August, but the temperature seldom goes above a hundred and two degrees in the shade at altitudes of 7,000 feet. The heat is not oppressive, the nights are cool, and the greenery and the abundant water is a delightful contrast from the hills and burning plains of Iran. There is very little rainfall. In the winter snowfall is heavy.



SASSANIAN BRIDGE, DIZFUL.



RUINS OF SUSA, SHOWING A FALLEN BULL-HEAD COLUMN.

CHAPTER XXXI

DIZFUL—SUSA—SHUSTER

DIZFUL is situated on the western limits of the Bakhtiari Land, on the lower reaches of the Ab-i-Diz, and has a population of about 20,000 souls. Its name, Diz-Ful (Fort of the Bridge), is derived from the Sassanian bridge that here spans the stream. The bridge has to be crossed entering the town from the Khurramabad side. It is four hundred and fifteen yards long, and contains twenty-two arches of varying shape and span. Part of it is a suspension-bridge. The width was originally twenty-five feet but was later reduced to nineteen when the bridge was rebuilt. The lower part is built of stone, and the superstructure of brick. The stone part is of greater antiquity than the brick, and dates back to Sassanian times to the time of Shapur I (A.D. 240-261). The construction shows the use of Roman methods. The Iranians attribute the construction of the bridge to Hoshang, the second King of the Peshdadian dynasty.

The site of the town is uneven and elevated, falling away on the river face in conglomerate cliffs, and the foot of the town is washed by the river when in flood.

The town itself is dirty and filthy and full of flies even in the middle of December. The houses are closely packed and are mostly of two storeys with flat roofs, some of them having serdabs. Many are made of brick and are well built. The streets are narrow and cobbled, and in some of them unpaved gutters run through the middle of the street, which during the rains are a mass of filth. Raised side walks for pedestrians run along the edges. On the west side of the town the houses are built on the face of the cliff, the foundations being near the water's edge, and the houses built in tiers from the river-bed. Water-borne diseases are frequent.

The town contains thirty-eight mosques and twenty-four shrines. The Imamzadeh of Baba Youseff is in the south-eastern corner of the town, and the Imamzadeh Sultan Hussein on the left bank of the river in the suburb called Ruband.

The chief local product of Dizful is indigo. There is a general neglect of trade and tillage. Early in the nineteenth century, it was the seat of the Government of Arabistan, but the Government was later transferred to Shuster. Mohammed Ali Mirza built a palace here on the right bank of the river, but not a trace now remains.

A branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran is situated on the left bank of the river overlooking the water-mills. About a mile from it is a miserable dirty hotel called the Hotel Ararat, for travellers. Dizful at present is the railhead of the Khor-Musa Dizful Railway.

The most interesting sights of Dizful, apart from the Sassanian bridge, are the flour mills built on the river-bed. About four hundred yards above the bridge, a line of mills, thirty-nine in number, run into the river at right angles from the left bank. They are built upon rocks and artificial dams, and are connected with each other by frail bridges or causeways and are turned by the current from the river and present a picturesque appearance. They all get submerged during the spring floods.

At Dizful and Shuster are still to be found the relics of the Sabians or, as they are sometimes called, the Christians of St. John. They are very poor, and employed as peasants or silversmiths. St. John the Baptist is their chief prophet, although they recognize the divinity of God and are said to have some conception of the Trinity. Water plays a large part in their ceremonies, baptism, marriage and prayer all requiring the use of running water. They have no churches, but have five books, the principal one being known as the Sidra or Book of Adam, written in a dialect of the Aramaic language, in an alphabet allied to the Syriac. The Sabians are monogamous, and do not practise circumcision, but have peculiar ordinances with regard to the eating of meat. They only intermarry amongst themselves, and in appearance and dress are very like the Arabs. Some of them employ the sign of the cross.

Fifteen miles to the south-west of Dizful, the prodigious mounds of Susa stand up against the sky. A passable motor road leads to the ruins, but it takes one and a half hours to do the fifteen miles. The Bala Rud has to be forded twice. The mounds are situated on the left bank of the Shaur or Shapur River, which rises at no great distance to the north, and flows below the reputed tomb of Daniel, and between the Ab-i-Diz (ancient Eulæus), six and a half miles distant on the east, and the Kerkhah (Choaspes), one and a half miles distant on the west. The latter river separated the populous part of the ancient city from the citadel and palace. The entire circumference of the mounds is from six to seven miles, and consists of three levels—the lowest being the remains of the ancient city; the second, a rectangular platform two and a half miles round and seventy-two feet high, was the fortified enceinte that contained the palace; the uppermost, one hundred and twenty feet in height, one thousand one hundred yards round the base and eight hundred and fifty yards round the summit, was the citadel, and is still known as Kaleh-i-Shush.

M. Dieulafoy, the Frenchman, who has been excavating in Susa for years, discovered that the palace of Darius had been destroyed by fire, and that upon its ruins a more splendid edifice was raised a century later by Artaxerxes Mnemon (405-359 B.C.). The edifices were a facsimile of the Hall of Xerxes at Persepolis. There were three porticoes with twelve columns each. The central hall contained thirty-six columns with bull-headed capitals. It is mentioned in the Book of Esther:—"The King made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan, the Palace, both unto great and small, seven days in the court of the garden of the King's palace; where were white, green and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon pavement of red and blue and white and black marble. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the King."

In the palace of Artaxerxes Mnemon were discovered two superb friezes which are now in the Louvre. The Friezes of the Archers and the Lions show enamelling in polychrome upon brick which was invented by the Babylonians, and adopted from them by the Achæmenian monarchs, chiefly for the palaces at Susa, where stone was not procurable, and there was abundance of clay firebricks. The Frieze of the Archers was probably divided into two groups, and the two lines of figures were separated by a central space covered with inscriptions which stand out white on blue ground. It represents a procession of warriors in relief about five feet in height. Their beard and hair are curled, and on their backs they carry a big quiver and a curving bow; they wear a yellow tunic of different patterns. Their complexions vary from black to white and represent the different

quarters of the globe from which they were recruited. Their twisted turbans and their spears identify them as the ten thousand Immortals who formed the Bodyguard of the King.

The Frieze of the Lions is supposed by Dieulafoy to have decorated the crowning of the Propylæa which rose in front of the palace, as the relief of the animals is not only higher than that of the arches, but the manipulation is characterised by greater breadth as well. The frieze represents the lions as striding forward with open jaw and glaring eye, with swelling muscle and outstretched tail, the colours being blue and pink and yellow. M. Dieulafoy discovered a number of royal seals, coins, vases, cylinders, and terracotta implements of the same epoch.

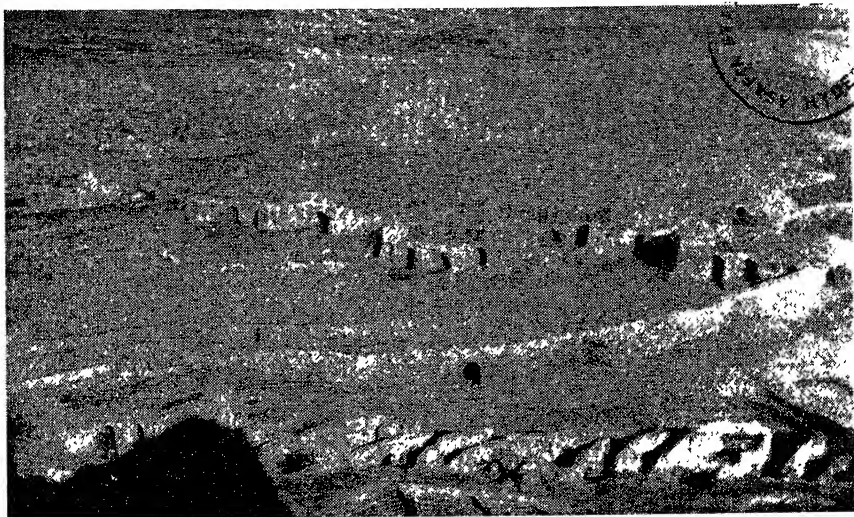
Susa or Shushan has figured in history from the earliest times. In the earliest recorded times, a Turanian people ruled by a Semitic nobility, lifted this independent kingdom of Elam to a pitch of great power. They spoke the Susian language, which appears in the second place in the trilingual inscriptions of the Achæmenian monarchs. About 2000 B.C. the famous Khudar Lagamar (Chedorlaomer) was one of their kings. Elam was always at warfare with Babylonia and Assyria. Sennacherib tried to invade it in 697 B.C., but his progress was checked by the winter snows; in 645 B.C. Asshurbanipal, the grandson of Sennacherib, appeared in triumph at Shushan, broke open the royal treasure house, whence he carried off thirty-two statues of its kings "of silver and gold, and bronze and alabaster." He went inside the temple, plundered the image of the national god, to look upon which was death. He levelled the tower of Shushan, and burnt the city to the ground.

About a hundred and fifty years afterwards Shushan rose like a Phoenix from its ashes under the hand of Darius, son of Hystaspes. It became the winter palace of the Achæmenian Kings. From here ran the royal road to Sardis, by which Xerxes started forth for Greece. Here came Esther to see Ahaseurus (Xerxes) and to plead for the Jews. Here were received ambassadors and refugees from Greece. Its walls were compared by Strabo to those of Babylon. The Choaspes¹ River, the water of which was borne in silver vessels to the table of the King of Kings, divided the palace from the populous part of the city. Alexander when he conquered Susa found a treasure of nearly ten millions sterling. After the destruction of Alexander, the city once more fell into ruins, but was rebuilt by Shapur II, under the title of Iran Shehr Shapur. Its pillars and stones later on were rifled to build the palaces of the Sassanian Kings. When the Arabs invaded Iran, the fortifications were dismantled but the town continued to exist, and in the Middle Ages was a centre of sugar cultivation. The town gradually fell into decay, and nothing remained to show its glory except the huge mounds between the rivers Kerkhah and Ab-i-Diz, until the excavations of M. Dieulafoy laid bare its history.

A tablet found in the Palace of Artaxerxes Mnemon shows the type of worship prevailing at the time. The inscription was on the four pedestals of the Column Hall and was in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian, and ran thus:—

"Says Artaxerxes the Great King, King of Kings, King of countries, King of this earth, the son of Darius the King:—"Darius was the son of Artaxerxes the King: Artaxerxes was the son of Xerxes the King; Xerxes was the son of Darius the King; Darius was the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide; this Apadana, Darius my ancestor made; under Artaxerxes my grandfather it was burnt; by the Grace of Ahura Mazda, Anahita and Mithra, I built this Apadana; may Ahura Mazda, Anahita and Mithra protect me."

¹ Now the Kerkhah.



WATER-MILLS, DIZFUL.



RELIEF AT SEIKUFT-I-SALMAN.

The worship of Ahura Mazda as the sole God was replaced by the worship of Anahita and Mithra.

At the present day, the mounds of Susa are most disappointing. Nothing remains but large excavated pits, with a few broken, bull-headed capitals, all the articles having been transported to the Louvre in Paris. No stretch of the imagination can convert these excavated hollows into the magnificent palaces of Darius and Artaxerxes.

A little below the great mound at Susa is the reputed tomb of Daniel, surmounted by a lofty pineapple cone in plaster. In a whitewashed inner chamber is the sarcophagus surrounded by a modern brass railing, upon which are hung tablets inscribed with prayers from the Koran. Behind is a vault. Near it is a caravanserai for pilgrims. The building is entirely modern, and there is no doubt it belongs to the Mahomedan period. However, from very early times, tradition has ascribed the burial-place of Daniel to this spot. Yet Arab authorities are united in saying that the Prophet's body was interred in the bed of the stream. Benjamin of Tudela said that strife having risen over the body of the saint between the people on the opposite sides of the river, Sultan Sanjar settled the dispute by having the corpse taken out, put in a coffin of glass, and suspended from the centre of the bridge by chains. Another pilgrim says that the coffin was made of polished copper which glittered like glass.

Besides the mounds of Susa, there are other relics of bygone ages in the neighbourhood which lie in this region from east to west, but are inaccessible by car.

On the banks of the Kerkhah, sixteen miles north-west of Susa, is a building called the Tak Aiwan or Kut Gapan. It has the appearance of a ruined Gothic cathedral and consists of a gallery some sixty feet long, in the middle of which was a dome. The building is definitely of Sassanian times. It is also called the Aiwan-i-Kerkhah.

Other Sassanian ruins are :—Jund-i-Shapur (Camp of Shapur), on the Shushtar road, ten miles south-east of Dizful; Teng-i-Butan (or Gorge of Idols), north-east of Dizful near the River Diz. The inscriptions are high upon the mountain-side, very difficult of access, and hidden by trees and brushwood. On the scarped rock are twelve figures sculptured in high relief, purposely mutilated by the Mussalmans, the heads having been completely destroyed. There is an inscription in Pehlavi characters to show that they were definitely of the Sassanian period. The larger figures are six feet in height, the smaller two feet three inches. The subject is supposed to be a religious procession or ceremony. Near these sculptures is another small tablet containing one figure.

In Bakhtiari Land are more relics of Susian, Achæmenian, Sassanian and Mahomedan times. The chief amongst them are at Mal Amir,¹ a mountain plain twelve miles long by five and a half broad, containing a small lake in the basin of the Upper Karun. The entrance to the plain is through a narrow gorge, with two ruined towers probably intended for defence. The inscriptions are in a narrow gorge in which is a large cavern called Skikuft-i-Salman containing a natural recess, on either side of which are figures sculptured in the rock. They are larger than life-size. The one to the right has a long curled beard, and a cap fitting close to the head with a double fold over the forehead. His robe reaches to his feet and the arms are folded on his breast. He appears to be a Magian. The other figure has a similar head-dress, but wears a short tunic, and his hands are

¹ Now Izeh.

joined in an attitude of prayer. Both these figures are in high relief. To the left of the first figure is a cuneiform inscription of thirty-six lines, and on the dresses of both figures are remains of more inscriptions. The inscription near the second figure has been entirely effaced by water percolating from the rock.

On the opposite side of the cave, high up on the rocks, are two tablets. One of them contains a group of five figures, three large and two small, the latter being about half the size of the former. They are figures of priests in prayer performing a religious ceremony. In the second tablet is a similar group of three figures. There are cuneiform inscriptions on these tablets.

This cave of Skikuft-i-Salman is on the south side of the plain, on the road leading to Koleh-i-Tul. Salman was supposed to be the tutor of Ali, the son-in-law and later on the successor of Mohammed. He is believed by the Ali Ilahi sect to have been an incarnation of the Deity, and to have been buried in this place, which is still held in great veneration. The sculptures here are either Susian or Achæmenian, and date from the eighth and ninth centuries B.C. and later.

The second group of ruins on the plain are the remains of an ancient city, occupying a large mound on the east side of the plain. Here are also the ruins of an edifice of dressed stone which may have been a fire temple or altar. The buildings are of the Sassanian period, and have been identified with the Sassanian Idej or Izej (Khidi of the local inscriptions and Khiteik of the Susian texts). Some people think it to have been the site of Anzan, the capital of the old Iranian monarchy, and of Cyrus before it was moved to Pasargadæ and Persepolis.

The third group of ruins are on the east side of the plain near the ruined Imamzadeh of Shah Sawar. Upon the surface of the rock is carved a tablet containing six figures. The figures are about two feet in height, and represent a King, probably of Susiana or Elam, seated on a throne, receiving five captives with their arms bound behind their backs. An inscription in cuneiform beneath these figures has been nearly obliterated.

In a small gorge called Hong is a relief of five figures carved on a detached rock. They appear to represent a meeting of a King of the Sassanian dynasty, followed by three attendants, with another King on horseback. There is no inscription.

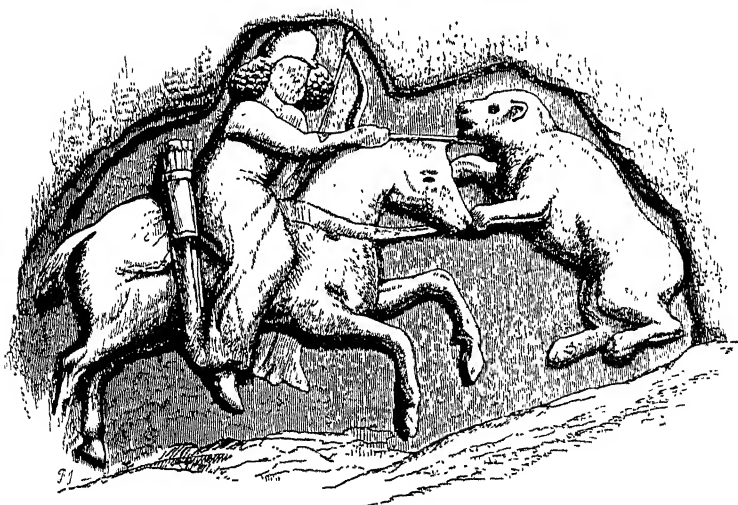
The most remarkable sculptures, however, are on the north end of the plain, in the ravine of Kul Fara or Faraun. There are five different tablets containing three hundred and forty-one small figures sculptured in the rock. There is a long inscription of twenty-four lines in the Susianian cuneiform characters. There are also short inscriptions carved across some of the figures.

The largest tablet, high up on the face of the rock, contains ten figures, and represents a sacrifice. Animals are brought in, and men are playing on musical instruments before an altar near which is a priest. The heads of most of the figures have been wilfully defaced by the Mahomedans.

Three faces of a large triangular detached rock are covered with similar figures and scenes of sacrifice. On another detached rock is repeated the same subject, and also in a third tablet, in a recess in the hill-side. In this last tablet are one hundred and thirteen figures. In another recess is a bas-relief of a King seated on his throne, with attendants, priests, and others worshipping before him. At the entrance to the gorge is a fallen rock, where



Parthian bas-relief of a Magus (after Flandin and Coste).



Parthian bas-relief (after Flandin and Coste).

there is the figure of a man about seven feet high, with his hands raised in prayer. On one side of him are nine smaller figures and beneath him are four. These are more like Assyrian sculptures, but unlike Achæmenian ones.

The plain of Mal Amir is perfectly flat, and surrounded on all sides by mountains rising to a height of 1,500 feet above the plain. The valley is covered with rushes and grass, and is stony and bare of trees, the northern portion being a marsh, while the drainage of the southern portion is through the gorge of Halaigan. In the centre of the valley is a mound known as Ijasa. About a mile due south on the Isfahan road is a caravanserai, seventy yards square with walls ten feet high, and a well in the centre. It is made of burnt brick, and was built by Isfandiar Khan in 1903. In the vicinity of the mound is a Lur graveyard with numerous stonelions. West of the mound is a square fort with four flanking towers, while about one and a half miles north can be seen the traces of a fort's circumference, with earth ramparts, and ruins of buildings of stone with mortar in the centre. The plain has been identified as Apirti, and was inhabited by the Apharsites mentioned by Ezra. Apirti was a province of Elam, which formed part of the colonists placed in Samaria by Assur Bani Ra to fill the places of the captive Jews. In A.D. 1330 Ibn Batutah, the Moorish traveller, visited Mal Amir and described it as being the city of Sultan Atabeg Afrasiab.

About twenty miles to the north-west of Mal Amir, and on the right bank of the Karun, is the plain of Susan. Some insignificant remains of roughly hewn stone, the probable foundations of a Sassanian building, are called by the Lurs, Masjid-i-Suleiman; some further heaps of stone masonry are designated Mal-i-Wiran (Ruined Settlement). As the Karun enters this valley from the east, it is flanked on either side by a paved causeway attributed to the Atabegs and a little below are the remains of the famous bridge of Harah Zad (so called from the mother of Ardeshir Babegan), which was supposed to be one of the wonders of the world. In mid-stream are the huge masses of brickwork, probably Sassanian, that supported the arches, and on the mountain-sides are the abutments from which they sprang. The abutments were probably much earlier.

Twenty-eight miles (seven farsakhs) from Behbahan, in the territory of the Bahmei tribe of Bakhtiaris, is a gorge called the Tang-i-Salouk where there are some sculptures.

The reliefs exist on an isolated mass of black rock, and were discovered by Baron de Bode in 1841. They are supposed to be Parthian. The most important of them represents a Magus, who seems to be in the act of consecrating a sacred Cippus, round which have been placed wreaths or chaplets. There are fifteen figures, apparently spectators, arranged in two rows one above the other, all of them standing except the first. The first is sitting on a chair or stool. These figures are nearly obliterated, but the figure of the Magus is better preserved. He wears a conical striped cap, and his hair is puffed out. He has a moustache, and a straight beard. He is clothed in a long-sleeved tunic, over which is worn a cloak, fastened at the neck by a brooch, and descending a little below the knees. He wears two pairs of trousers, one long and the other short, the former plain, the latter striped perpendicularly. There is a necklace round the neck, and on the right arm are three armlets, and three bracelets.

On the same rock is a second relief in which a Parthian cavalier, armed with a bow and arrows, and a spear, is fighting a wild animal, probably a



PARTHIAN BAS-RELIEF NEAR THE TANG-I-SALOUK.



SHUSTER.

From a photograph by Lt.-Col. A. H. Burn, C.I.E.

bear. On his head is a rounded cap, and he wears a long flowing robe. The hair is puffed out. He carries a bow in his left hand, and his quiver hangs from the saddle behind him. With his right hand he thrusts his spear into the neck of the beast.

On another face of the same rock is a female figure reclining upon a couch, and guarded by three male attendants, one at the head of the couch unarmed, and the remaining two at its foot, seated and armed with spears. The female has also puffed out hair, and carries in her outstretched right hand, a chaplet or wreath. One of the spearmen has a rayed head-dress, and another has a short streamer attached to the head of his spear. Below the main tablet are three rudely carved standing figures probably representing attendants.

These probably form a single series, the Parthian King hunting the bear, the Queen upon her couch awaiting his return, and the Chief Magus attached to the court praying for the monarch's safety.

Shuster

A three and a half mile drive from Dizful on an extremely bad motor road, past the Jond-i-Shapur, brings the traveller to Shuster. Here the population is chiefly Arab, but many of the Bakhtiari are under the jurisdiction of its Governor. It was once the capital of the province of Khuzistan which contains the alluvial plains between the mountains and the sea, including the plains of Dizful, Shuster, Ram Hormuz, and the marshes of Hawizeh. The boundaries of Khuzistan may be defined as a line from the Kerkhah River to Mahommerah on the west, the Bakhtiari hills on the north, the Shatt-el-Arab and the Persian Gulf on the south, and the Hindian River on the east. The province is identical with the ancient Elam, and the classical Susiana. The province is administered by an Iranian Deputy Governor, or by a Sheikh of one of the ruling Arab families appointed by the Government, the villages and camps being under their respective Sheikhs. In olden times they were all united under the Vali of Arabistan, an illustrious family of Senjid who ruled almost independently.

The population is chiefly Arab, or mixed Arab and Iranian. Arabs came in after the Arab conquests of A.D. 641. Shah Ismail brought a large number of Arab colonists from Nejd, and since then Arab tribes from Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf have immigrated here.

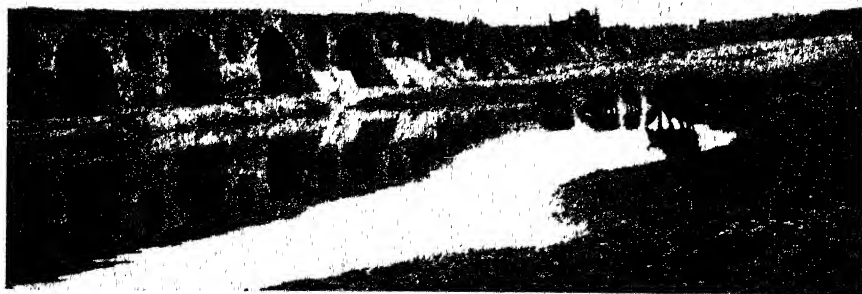
Shuster first came into prominence in the days of Shapur I (A.D. 240-271). His engineering works made Shuster a place of great importance. When the Arabs invaded Iran, its inhabitants made a stout resistance, but were eventually betrayed by one of their own men. When Timur came before the walls of Shuster the Shusteris, remembering their previous experience, surrendered at once and were treated with clemency by him. He is also said to have repaired the bridge of Valerian. Under the Sefavi dynasty Shuster was a place for Shiah propaganda and a hot-bed of fanaticism. It was the residence of Mohammed Ali Mirza, son of Feth Ali Shah, who was Governor-General of Kermanshah, Luristan and Arabistan. Some years after his death, the country was devastated by plague and then by cholera, after which Shuster was superseded as provincial capital by Dizful.

The town is built upon a rock, and has command of the Karun River. The river, till then pent up in narrow gorges, emerges three miles north of



GATEWAY TO VALERIAN'S BRIDGE.

From a photograph by Lt.-Col. A. H. Burn, C.I.E.



VALERIAN'S BRIDGE.

From a photograph by Lt.-Col. A. H. Burn, C.I.E.

there was a ruined gateway and guard-house. This bridge is called the Pul-i-Lashkar, and the canal is known by the name of the Minan Canal. It was meant to irrigate the high-lying lands of the suburbs to the south of the city. The bursting of Valerian's dam lowered considerably the bed of the river and made this canal a failure.

Apart from Valerian's bridge, and the water-mills of Shuster, the town has other objects of interest. The citadel of Shuster is an imposing structure. It is situated on the summit and extremity of a rock, where it rises with a precipitous face of over a hundred feet from the river-bed. This fort has existed from the time of Shapur, and at the time of the Arab conquest was known as Selasil. The ancient castle, however, has been destroyed, and a modern structure has taken its place. This is the residence of the Governor. The walls are loopholed towards the city. One of the rooms in the castle contained a large tank of running water in the centre, above which there was a platform.

Close to the castle is the Arsenal, and here there are some old bronze guns. One of these dates from Sefavi times, another was cast at Hawizeh by Nadir Shah, while a third was a present from Nicholas I of Russia to Abbas Mirza, son of Feth Ali Shah, at the end of the war of 1828.

The town of Shuster is dirty, and the bazaars small. The houses have the same serdabs at Shuster as at Dizful. A curious phenomenon is the number of storks nesting on the wind towers and roofs of the houses.

The Imperial Bank of Iran has an agency here. A new garage has been recently opened for travellers.

Before proceeding to a description of Ahwaz and Mahommerah which are both situated on the Karun River, I will first give a description of the river itself, Iran's longest and only navigable river.

CHAPTER XXXII

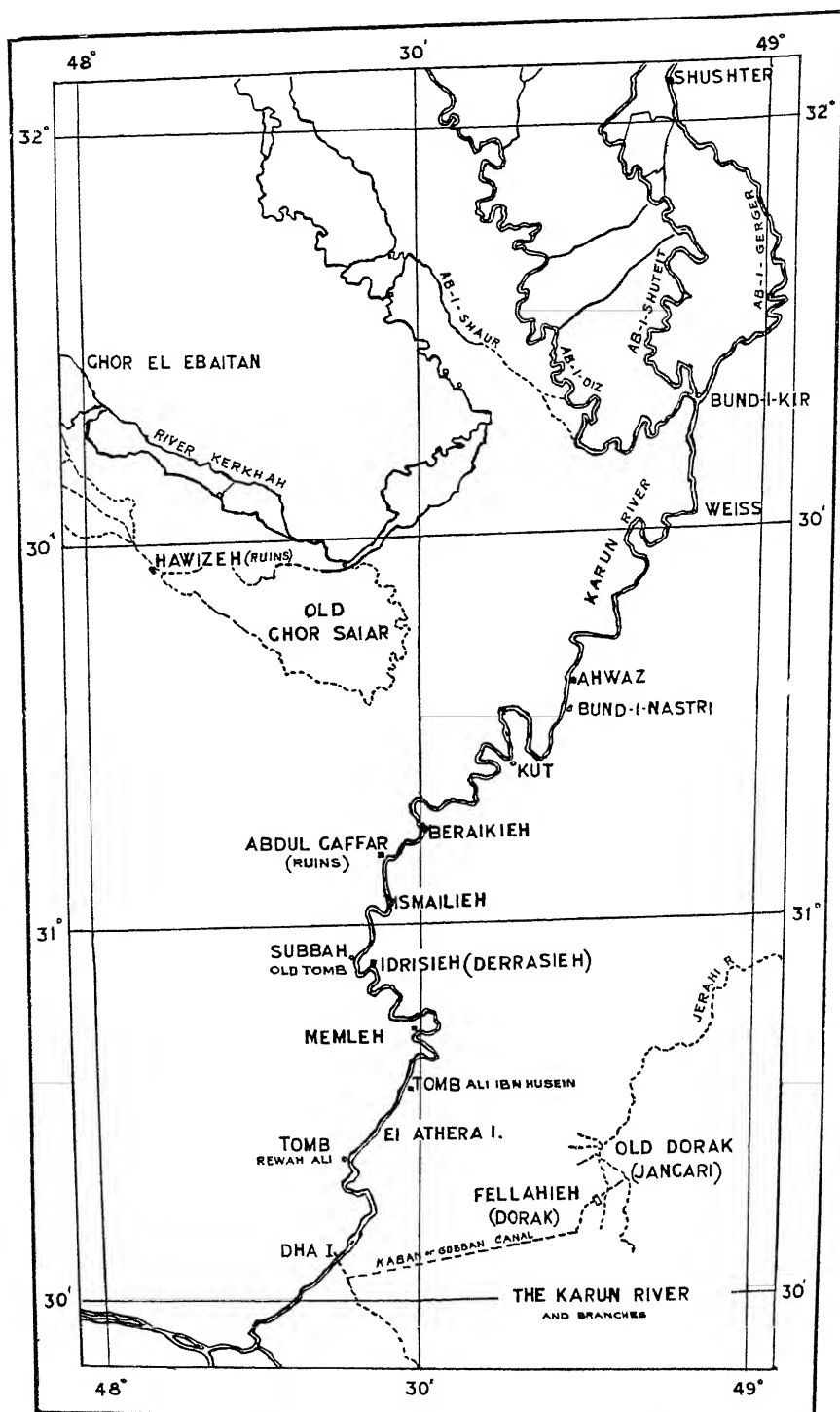
THE KARUN RIVER

IN the heart of the Bakhtiari country, hundred miles due west of Isfahan, is the magnificent mountain cluster known as the Kuh-i-Rang (variegated mountain) just under 13,000 feet in height. From this great centre spring the Karun on one side and the Zindeh Rud on the other, the Kuh-i-Rang serving as a water-parting for the two rivers. The Karun drains towards the gulf. Within the first twenty miles of its course, it passes the Col of Galgushak, which is the proper divide between it and the Zindeh Rud. It was at this spot, known as the Kar Kunan, that the Sefavi Kings Shah Tahmasp and Shah Abbas tried to divert the waters of the Karun into the Zindeh Rud. Shah Tahmasp began to excavate a tunnel, but had to give it up on account of noxious vapours. Shah Abbas abandoned the tunnel scheme, and commenced a cutting, but was defeated by the winter cold and snow. He also tried to dam the river to raise its level, and mined the rock, but was not successful. The quarried rocks are still seen piled in heaps, and the ruins of stone huts are also visible.

In the peak called Haft Tanan (Seven Corpses—said to be those of the first and last parties that ever reached the summit) are the real headwaters of the Karun. Fourteen miles lower down, it enters the Dirigan Valley, where it is fed by two remarkable springs of Marbarreh and Kalungchi, in the Zardeh Kuh and also erroneously known as the Sar-Chasmeh-i-Kurang. From a hole in the cliff wall, and communicating with a deep well at the other end of a cleft in the rock, the water gushes out and falls in a pool forty feet below and then runs for twelve miles before joining the Karun. The river now enters the Binisgun Valley and shortly after is enclosed in a gorge called the Tang-i-Kaiseri, the perpendicular walls rising about 3,000 feet. The Kuh-i-Kaiseri (10,500 feet) is on the right, and the Kuh-i-Luisi (11,000 feet) on the left. Emerging from this gorge which is about four miles long, it enters the valley below, and two miles farther on is crossed by a temporary wooden bridge with a span of fifty feet, and a narrow footway of six feet in breadth. This bridge is known as the Pul-i-Ali Kuh, and here the volume of the river is contracted within a rift only nine feet across.

Six miles below at Rustami, the river is crossed by a temporary wooden structure near the remains of a large ancient stone bridge, and just below is the spring of Serd-Ab gushing out of the rocks a quarter of a mile away, and falling straight into the Karun. At the village of Kaj the river, of a sea-green colour, is again crossed by a stone and mortar bridge of a one-pointed arch. Four miles lower down it receives the Ab-i-Behishtabad or the Darkash Warkash which drains the whole of the Chehar Mahal plateau. The Ab-i-Behishtabad receives its three principal sources before entering the Tang-i-Darkash Warkash at the south-western extremity of the plateau. In forcing its way through the Tang, the river falls six hundred feet in a course of six miles, and passes out of the gorge under a one-pointed arch bridge of thirty-foot span above the village of Behishtabad. Two miles lower down it joins the Karun, both rivers having run an equal course of seventy-five miles up to this point.

The Karun now takes a southerly course, and enters another deep rift ten miles long with perpendicular walls, about 1,500 feet high. Near the village of Dawazdeh Imam, it is crossed by another stone and mortar bridge of two arches. After passing through the valley it enters a



tremendous rift called the Tang-i-Ardil. The scenery is simply magnificent. The river zigzags with acute bends through perpendicular walls of rock. Coming out of the rift with a bend at right angles to itself, it runs due east to the little hamlet of Dupulan, having completed one hundred and five miles of its course. Here it is joined by a considerable stream known as the Ab-i-Sabz Kuh or the Sabzu. Just opposite the valley of Dupulan, before entering the Karun, the Ab-i-Sabz Kuh is bridged by a wicker bridge.

Near Dupulan is the Chasmeh-i-Ghurab. Above the spring is the steep hill of Tur, and on it are the remains of a fort. Two similar ruins are visible from Tur, one on a rocky ledge of an offshoot of the Kuh-i-Gerra on the east side of the Dinarud Valley, and the other on the crest of a headland of the Sanganaki range. The local tradition says that in ancient times, when bows and arrows were the only weapons used, there was in the neighbourhood of Ghurab a King called Farukh Padishah who had three sons, Selman, Tur and Iraj. After their father's death, the three youths quarrelled, and built these three forts—Kaleh Selman, Kaleh Tur and Kaleh Iraj. Later on, their ambitions led them to seek "fresh fields and pastures new" and they founded three empires. Selman went to the Golden Horn and founded Stamboul, while Tur founded Turkistan, and Iraj became the founder of the Iranian Empire. This legend reminds one of Firdausi's Shah Nameh and the story of Faridun and his three sons, Selim, Tur, and Iraj.

Kaleh Tur is a stone building of hewn stone cemented with mortar. The inner place is about eighty square yards, and the walls are from three to six feet thick. The Ab-i-Ghurab after watering the plain of Ghurab rushes down a grassy valley full of roses and lilies, and wooded with oak, elm, walnut and hawthorn.

The village of Dupulan is on an eminence on the left bank of the Karun, and here the river is compressed to a width of about twenty yards. At this point, a stone bridge of one large pointed arch, with a smaller one for the flood, and a rough roadway corresponding to the arch on the steepness of its pitch spans the Karun, which passes gently and smoothly, its waters a deep cool green, and the Ab-i-Sabz Kuh joining the Karun near the bridge. Dupulan has an altitude of 4,950 feet, and in its course from the Kuh-i-Rang to this point, the Karun has descended about 4,000 feet. The river now takes a southerly course, but after a few miles turns south-west again, and passes between the Kuh-i-Serdab on the right, and the Sabz-Kuh on the left, and later it enters a defile known as the Tang-i-Agha with the Kuh-i-Bozman closing in on the right bank. Passing through the defile, it makes a bend in the west by south-west direction, and passes between the height of Sunak on the right, and three miles lower down by the hill of Baghak (3,600 feet). Here it receives numerous streams, and winding its way through deep valleys, a little below the hamlet of Charkha, receives one of its most important tributaries, the Ab-i-Bazuft, which flows in from the north-west in a bed running almost parallel with its own upper waters. The river has now run one hundred and sixty-six miles, and taking a course due south for another four miles, turns north-west where a stream from the Kuh-i-Shapir joins it on the right. Turning south-west again past the Sar-i-Chal on the left bank, it is joined by the united streams of the Ab-i-Lurdigan and the Ab-i-Bors, the latter coming from the Kuh-i-Dina range. After many windings, the Karun River passes the village of Shapir, and continuing north-west with the Mungasht range on the left, and smaller ranges on the right, it passes two ferries. From the point where the Ab-i-Kaukab joins it, the river makes sharp zigzags, and after winding through deep gorges and ravines between the Kuh-i-Safid on the right, and the Kuh-i-Razandan on the left, passes the site of an old log bridge, and a few miles further on flows through a rift below the Kuh-i-Safid.



GENERAL VIEW, AHWAZ.

From a photograph by Lt.-Col. A. H. Burn, C.I.E.

After a few more twists and turns, and passing within a few miles west of the sources of the Ab-i-Bazuft, and constantly changing its direction, the river at three hundred and seventy-five miles of its course comes out of the Tang-i-Kaleh-i-Dukhtaran, a gorge commanded by the ruins of two Sassanian castles. Tradition differs as to the story of these ruins, now known as Kaleh-i-Dukhtaran. Some say that in order to carry on engineering works on the river, it was necessary to import large numbers of workmen from far-off places. Having done so, it struck the originators of the schemes that their cost might be reduced as far as payment for labour was concerned, by the provision not only of making them pay for all foodstuffs, but also by a liberal supply of women for their enjoyment in leisure hours. It was so arranged that the amount paid to the workmen should be recovered not only by exorbitant charges on foodstuffs, but also from the earnings of the ladies who were instructed to charge a heavy price for their pleasures. Another version is that when the Lurs descended into the plains to rape the neighbourhood, they carried away the women to these forts.

After emerging from the hills, the Karun passes the village of Gutrand on the right bank. Turning south it enters the plain of Akili, which is the most fertile and luxuriant land on its banks. Wheat, barley, tobacco, cotton are all grown here, and every bit is cultivated. It now passes through its last defile through the Kuh-i-Fidalak, a sandstone ridge, and debouches upon the plains of Khuzistan, three miles above Shuster.

The course of the river from the start is due south-east for a hundred miles; then with a bend it flows south-west and cuts a fifty-mile channel through transverse ranges; then for another hundred miles it flows north-west in a direction inverse but exactly parallel to its original course, and finally turning south enters the plains of Khuzistan.

About six hundred yards above Shuster, the river divides into two, the Ab-i-Gerger and the Ab-i-Shuteit, the courses of which have already been described. Both these branches reunite thirty miles south of Shuster at the Bund-i-Kir. At this point, the Ab-i-Diz enters the Karun. The village of Bund-i-Kir is situated at the angle of the confluence of the two branches of the Karun, and there is a ferry on the Ab-i-Gerger just opposite the village. The Bund-i-Kir (the Dyke of Bitumen) is situated twenty-five to thirty miles south of Shuster and at four hundred and fifty-three miles of the river's course. Here the Ab-i-Diz after meandering through the jungle and untilled plain where lions used to be found, and joined by the Shapur River, enters the Karun. Here are the stones of an artificial dam which once spanned the river at this point, and which were probably cemented by bitumen. The bund was supposed to have been built by Darius. The little village is surrounded by the ruins of a former city, which Layard says belonged to the Kainian, Sassanian and Arab periods. He identified it with the remains of the Iranian city Rustam Kawadh, and the Arab city of Askeri-Mukrem. Very little now remains of it, its bricks having been taken away to construct a fort and telegraph station on the bank of the Shuteit.

From Bund-i-Kir to Weiss, a distance of twelve miles, the river runs a straight course south. The Shapur which washes the western face of the great mounds of Susa, flowed into the Karun from the north-west, a little below Weiss, but later on adopted a southerly course joining the river near Ahwaz; then changing its course again turned northwards, entering the Ab-i-Diz at a point twelve miles above Bund-i-Kir.

Weiss has left a name for inhospitality amongst the Arab tribes. It is a miserable village on the left bank of the river and has an Imamzadeh.

From Weiss (four hundred and sixty-five miles) to Ahwaz (four hundred and ninety-six miles) the river takes a serpentine course, running south-west by south and passes between banks twenty feet in height with a vertical profile of marl. The width varies from two hundred to three hundred and fifty yards. Water for irrigation is drawn up from pools hollowed in the river bank, by means of leather skins, and a pulley worked by oxen pacing up and down an inclined plane on the top of the bank—the old custom of Elam and Chaldea. The Arab villages are situated on the very brink of the river.

After leaving Ahwaz the river passes by the village of Kut Abdulla, the main settlement of the Bawieh. This is one of the places between Mohammerah and Shuster, where the local Sheikh formerly claimed the right of levying custom duty upon any goods passing up the river by boat or caravan. The next village passed is Kut Omeirah, and then follow a series of windings as far as Beraikieh, a little village of three hundred Arab inhabitants. Ismailieh is next passed on the left bank, and the tide from the Shatt-el-Arab reaches as far as this place. In the winter, a few Arab encampments are seen on the water's edge.

At Kajarieh is a telegraph office and halting place for steamers, and then follows Imam Saba, the half-way stage; further on, the small village of Imamzadeh Ali ibn Hussein is left behind, and then on the left bank is the pyramidal tomb of Robein-ibn-Yakub or Rewa Ali, in thirteen steps.

About fifteen miles from Mohammerah is a disused canal of the Karun, its old dried up bed, and is supposed to be that up which the fleet of Nearchus sailed to meet Alexander at Susa. We read of a canal being cut from the Lower Karun in the time of the Elamites and Babylonians, which was in existence in Alexander's time. This canal is known as the Karun-el-Amieh or the Blind Karun, which after being repaired by the Asad-ud-Dowleh, was called the Nahr-el-Jedid.

From the Karun-el-Amieh, another canal has been cut leading to the former Kab capital of Fellahiyeh, and known as the Kaban Canal. Sheikh Salman in the eighteenth century threw a dam across the Karun at this point with the object of diverting its waters into this canal or into the Karun-el-Amiyeh. The dam was destroyed during the Iranian invasion of Karim Khan. The canal is navigable at times to Fellahiyeh.

Some two miles above Mohammerah is the Bahmeshir Canal, by which the Karun once entered the Persian Gulf. The name is probably derived from Bahman Ardeshir, to whom many works are attributed in these parts. The canal runs parallel to the Shatt-el-Arab for forty miles and then enters the sea. Fish are found in great numbers, especially when the tide retires. In ancient times, the Bahmeshir was the eastern mouth of the Tigris, and the Shatt-el-Arab the western. The island between them and the Haffar is the Dilman of the cuneiform inscriptions, and the Iranian "Mian-i-Rudan" (Between the Rivers).

In the lower part of its course, the banks of the Karun are low and flat, and are covered with low shrubs and tamarisk bushes and willows here and there. The river is intersected by creeks or by the beds of forgotten canals. From Gisheh, eight miles above Mohammerah, greenery commences, and Mohammerah itself is covered with palm groves.

At six hundred and ten miles, the Karun enters the Shatt-el-Arab through the Haffar Canal. The Haffar Canal was formerly a small canal

cut for irrigation purposes, but the river broke down the dam, and burst through it in full force, carving out a new channel of exit for itself.

The Karun is identified with the Pasitigris (Lesser Tigris), up which Nearchus sailed with the Macedonian fleet to join Alexander. Messrs. Lynch Bros. used to ply steamers between Mohammerah and Ahwaz, but they are no more. They and other firms combined into the firm known as "Mespers" (Mesopotamia Iran Corporation). The only steamers nowadays are the A.P.O.C. stern-wheelers which go from Mohammerah to Ahwaz—and from up above the rapids at Ahwaz to Dar-i-Khazineh.)

CHAPTER XXXIII

AHWAZ AND MOHAMMERAH

FROM Shuster a fair-weather motor road leads to Ahwaz,¹ but one can also go by steamer.

Nearchus, when he ascended the Pasitigris (Karun) came to a lake on which was situated the Susian town of Aginis, five hundred stadia from Susa. The Tigris flowed into the northern end of this lake, which probably filled the depression west of the Karun as far as Hawizeh. Nearchus ascended the Pasitigris to a bridge of boats on the road between Iran and Susa, and six hundred stadia from the latter, which is probably near the present Ahwaz. Later on, Ahwaz was called the market of Khuzistan, and its inhabitants were Elamites, called Haj or Huj, and the Arabs called the place Suk-el-Ahwaz (The Market of the Huj). Ahwaz was situated at the junction of several roads—north to Asker Mukrem and Shuster, east to Persis (Fars), south to Basra and west to Wasit on the Tigris.

Gibbon talks about the "gay barbarian" Hormuzan, Prince or Satrap of Ahwaz and Susa, who had an interview with the Khalif Omar. Abdul Feda the historian, describing Ahwaz in the days of the Abbaside Caliphs, said that the banks of the river were adorned with gardens and pleasure houses, enriched by extensive plantations of sugarcane, and other products of the vegetable kingdom. Negroes had been imported to work on the sugar plantations, but they rebelled against the Caliphs. The revolt was suppressed and the city destroyed from which it has never recovered. The Ka'b Arabs came over here and made it their home, and utilized the bricks of the ancient city of Aginis for their own mud hovels.

On a sandstone ridge behind the town are found hollow excavations in the rock, supposed to be the Towers of Silence of the ancient Zoroastrians. Bones were actually found in some of them.

An amusing incident happened during the fight of 1857. The Iranian infantry, seven thousand strong, together with a large force of cavalry, was encamped a few yards from the right bank of the Karun. Five hundred men held the town and fort on the opposite shore. As soon as the English prepared to land, the garrison decamped, and the whole army disappeared. The Iranian Commander-in-Chief paid a bribe of £8,000 to the Grand Vizier, and received a sword of honour from the Shah.

Modern Ahwaz is the capital of Khuzistan, and the seat of a Governor-General. It is situated on the left bank of the Karun. It is a small place full of mud hovels, of about two hundred and fifty houses, consisting of an Arab population. It has an Imamzadeh (saint's tomb) with a white plastered cupola. There are a lot of men belonging to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company here, but the headquarters are at Abadan. A British Consul and a Vice-Consul are stationed here.

The town of Ahwaz is two hundred and twenty feet above the level of the Persian Gulf. Apart from the few relics of antiquity it possesses, the interest of Ahwaz lies in the famous rapids of the Karun River.

The tertiary sandstone ridges in the neighbourhood of the river at a short distance from the left bank form a number of ledges right across the

¹ See illustration on page 186.

river-bed, then disappear under the surface of the plain and re-appear and form other ridges lower down to the west. There are four of these ledges, that cut the stream almost at right angles and bring a difference in water level of about eight to ten feet above and below, and this is what constitutes the rapids. Immediately above Ahwaz, the river is six hundred yards wide, and is divided into two streams by an island of silt known as the Umman Nakhl. Then follow the rapids for one and a half miles which terminate at the lower end of another small island called Umm-es-Saba.

The first rapid is formed below the point of the two large islands; the second rapids are two in number and formed by a ledge of rock at the head of the same islands. Both these are insignificant. The fall of water in the third rapid is more powerful. The fourth rapid is one hundred and fifty yards up the stream, and the water comes down with a roar, through two gateways, at the western extremity of a prominent reef, stretching across the river, and supporting the remains of the great dam of Ahwaz. The dam was built by the Sassanian Kings, and was intended to hold up the waters of the river, which were diffused throughout the country. By whom the dam was destroyed is not known, but probably it was in the thirteenth century, when the prosperity of the town fell into decay. There is a local legend which attributed the disaster to the wicked machinations of a sugar merchant, who had cornered the market; after a time when the price had risen, he opened his bags, and found them full not of sugar, but of scorpions, whose stings were so sharp that they cut a thick felt carpet into two. Myriads of these scorpions came out so that the people fled, and have never returned. Big masses of masonry firmly held together by cement, and built upon each of the rocky islets that span the current, still survive, and testify to the ruins of this once magnificent dam. The abutment on the right bank is also visible. On the right and left banks, passages and tunnels have been cut in the rock at the water levels where water-wheels originally used to revolve. There is a fall of three feet in a distance of fifty yards in the fourth rapids.

A little above the village of Ahwaz, and half a mile up the stream are the fifth set of rapids. They are formed by a low ridge of rock projecting into the river, and forming rapids only when the river is full.

Sharks occasionally come up the river and are found in the pools below the rapids. They have also been known at Dar-i-Khazineh, and even at Shuster, and at Aquileh. Just above the topmost rapid, there is a bed of an old canal leading in a southerly direction from the left bank of the river. It was supposed to have been dug for diverting the waters of the river while the bund was being constructed.

Mohammerah

From Ahwaz a visit can be paid to Mohammerah, forty-seven miles by steamer, the road journey being much shorter. About twenty miles south of Basra, the Karun River flows into the Shatt-el-Arab from the north-east by an artificial channel known as the Haffar Canal. At the point where it flows into the Shatt-el-Arab, the Haffar Canal is about a quarter of a mile in width, with a depth of from twenty to thirty feet. The town of Mohammerah is situated upon its right bank and stands on alluvial soil, which would otherwise be subject to erosion, but is protected within the limits of the town by date logs laid horizontally forming quays and wharves. On the quay is a warehouse. The town is surrounded by palm groves, but behind the town is an open treeless desert stretching for miles.

In olden days Mohammerah was an important port. On or near its present site, Alexander the Great founded an Alexandria. That city was destroyed by flood but was rebuilt by Antiochus, and called Antiochia. Destroyed by another flood, it was rebuilt and called Charax; and having been captured by an Arab Chief named Spasines, it was called Spasini Charax. Ardeshir Babagan rebuilt the town about A.D. 235 and changed its name from Kerkh Misan to Astrabad.

In November 1841 Mohammerah was occupied by the Iranian troops, and after the fighting with the Kab Arabs was over, a dispute arose between Turkey and Iran as to whose territory it should be. Russia and England intervened, and by the Treaty of Erzeroum, Mohammerah was given to Iran.

In 1857, during the Anglo-Iranian War, Mohammerah was shelled by British men-of-war. The defending force vanished without striking a blow, leaving their tents, stores, ammunition, and a few guns. Most of the officers were publicly disgraced by order of the Shah, and were dragged along the ranks by rings through their noses, and beaten and cast into prison. The Commander-in-Chief, Khanlar Mirza, by making a present of £8,000 to the Prime Minister, received a sword and robe of honour.

At the present day, Mohammerah is an important town with a powerful Sheikh, and the seat of a British Vice-Consulate, which is situated on the right bank of the Haffar between the town and the custom-house. There is a custom-house and a quarantine station here.

The town has about eight hundred houses, some of brick, some of mud, but there are also some modern buildings. There is a good brick bazaar of over three hundred shops, and there is trade in rice and dates.

There is also a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran.

Water is plentiful, and that from the Haffar Canal is supposed to be very good.

Ocean-going steamers discharge their cargo at Mamuri, without leaving the Shatt-el-Arab, but some steamers call weekly at Mohammerah.

Pilgrims going to Kerbela come by steamer from Ahwaz to Mohammerah.

Close to Mohammerah town is Abadan, the headquarters of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Here is the shrine of Khidr, which stands to the south end of the island, and is largely visited by Shiahs. Khidr is believed to have existed in the time of Abraham, to have been a companion of Moses, and to have attained immortality by having drunk the water of life. The population of Abadan is about 24,000 souls.

From Ahwaz the visitor can go to Bushire on a fair-weather track passable for motors, but quite impassable during wet weather, or he can retrace his steps via Shuster, Dizful and Khurramabad to Burujird, and get to Bushire via Qum and Isfahan.

CHAPTER XXXIV

I. BURUJIRD TO QUM

FROM Burujird the road to Qum goes via Malayer or Daulatabad. It is a good motor road all the way. Malayer, situated at an elevation of 5,600 feet above sea-level, and with a population of about 7,000 souls, is equidistant from Hamadan and Burujird, being thirty-eight and a half miles from either. From here a good motor road goes to Nehavend, which is much superior to the road from Burujird. Malayer is situated under the hill of Lashkarak, which towers above the place. There is an Iranian Post and Telegraph Office here, and supplies and water are plentiful. There is a public square planted with trees, a good bazaar, six caravanserais, and a few kava khanehs where food can be obtained.

From Daulatabad the road goes past the village of Pari which has a population of 1,500, mostly people from Fars, and then enters a defile known as the Tang-i-Tureh, a pass bordered on either side by precipitous hills, which rise from three to four hundred feet over the valley. The hill to the north is known as the Kuh-i-Qazak, and that to the south is the Kuh-i-Sagvar. The defile is about two miles long, and on the other side of it is the village of Tureh, at an elevation of 6,220 feet above the sea, and a small village full of gardens and vineyards full of water.

Between Tureh and Harun, the Rud-i-Duab is crossed by a fine bridge of nine arches, and twenty-eight and a half miles from Sultanabad is the village of Harun. Here there are cotton and castor cultivations, and just beyond it is a large valley surrounded by high mountains, the valley being dotted over with villages. The road now enters the mountains, and passes the village of Nimad Kuh, elevation 6,390 feet. The town is well cultivated, and has numerous gardens. From the top of the pass in a hill, the lights of Sultanabad are visible from a distance.

Sultanabad

Sultanabad, altitude 5,952 feet, the capital of the province of Iraq Ajemi, was founded by Youseff Khan Gurji in 1808. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the place was chosen for the reorganization of the Iranian Army. The town is clean and compact, and straight wide streets run from end to end, and from side to side at right angles to each other. All round the town new houses are being built and gardens laid out. The town was originally surrounded by a mud wall and ditch, but these have been broken down. The bazaars are airy, and completely vaulted. There is one long bazaar of about six hundred yards, from which small ones branch off at right angles. The town is well lighted with electric light. There are many clean caravanserais, but the cleanest and most comfortable place for the traveller is the Garage Iran wa Fars. The food is good and the Manager speaks English. A British Vice-Consul is stationed in the town. The population is about 10,000.

The town and the province are noted for their carpet weavers. Some of the most exquisite Sultanabad carpets were made for the Shah's Palace. Silk carpets like those of Kashan are made to order.

Outside the town, in a place called the Kaleh or Fort, Ziegler & Co., a Manchester firm, have built large premises. They have their own dyeing rooms. There is also a branch of the Oriental Carpet Manufactory.

Four miles north-east of Sultanabad is a salt lake.

Proceeding from Sultanabad, and four miles out of the town, the road forks into two, the right one, a good motor road, going direct to Isfahan, and the left to Qum. About eight miles further on, the little village of Shaveh (elevation 5,570 feet), with its few mud houses, is passed. Just outside the village of Ibrahimieh, the road once more divides into two, the right going to Isfahan, and joining the main Qum-Isfahan road, fifty miles south of Qum. The Qum road passes through Ibrahimieh, a village of about 4,000 people, at an altitude of 5,860 feet, and a great place for making carpets. The place has a small bazaar, and one or two caravanserais.

Eighteen miles beyond Ibrahimieh is the village of Rahgird of about 1,500 inhabitants, and possessing an Iranian Government Telegraph Office. Here there is a caravanseraï.

From Rahgird to Qum is about thirty-five miles. Before getting to Qum, the snow-capped peak of Mount Demavend is visible from a distance of one hundred and sixty miles on a good clear day. The ruins of Kasr-i-Dukhtar are passed four miles from Qum, and then the Qum River is crossed by a bridge of nine arches. The bridge is built of substantial masonry, length about two hundred and twenty-five feet. The centre arch is forty-five feet and the others twenty feet long. The width of the bridge is eighteen feet. The river has banks of clay, and a pebbly bed.

Close to the bridge is an Amniyeh post, with a kava khaneh attached to it. Here the name of the visitor, that of his father, and his occupation are taken down, and a complete examination is made of his kit to see if he is smuggling opium or alcohol into the holy city. It is as well for the visitor to look after his kit, otherwise one or two valuables will surely disappear. During the time of my visit I had a stick which fascinated one of the Amniyeh (road guard). The fellow kept on playing with the stick, and while I was busy looking after my kit, the stick was quietly taken away to the kava khaneh. I detected the theft and went back again for it. After a lot of protestations of denial and "Khuda Qasams" ("I swear by God") I managed to get it back.

As the great south road from Teheran to Bushire passes through Qum, I will give a description of this road before proceeding to the description of Qum. The total distance from Sultanabad to Qum is seventy-seven miles.

II. *Teheran to Qum*

Leaving Teheran by the Qum Gate, the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim with its golden dome is passed. Here Nasr-ed-din Shah was murdered and buried, and so is his favourite wife. The road then goes through a dreary valley known as the Malik-el-Moat or the Valley of the Angel of Death. The Karaj River is passed at Hasanabad, twenty-seven miles from Teheran, by a fine bridge of one arch with a forty-five foot span.

The village of Aliabad is next passed, containing a fine stone caravanseraï, with a red-columned portico to the east. It stands on the edge of the Daria-i-Nimak or the Great Salt Lake. The Great Salt Lake is a sheet of salt water, whose eastern boundary is formed by one continuous sheet of the hardest rock salt, on which heavy blows with a hammer make no impression. The salt contains considerable moisture, and the slabs are to a great degree transparent, and dotted with patches of soft white salt. The following rivers enter the marsh:—The Karaj, Ab-i-Shur, Karasu, Qum, Jajrud and Kand.

The old road from Teheran to Qum used to pass through the Haoos Sultan on the edge of a bleak desert, where there was a fine caravanserai, but it is deserted and now in ruins. This is what Morier says of the Haoos Sultan.¹

“This is the place which was reputed to be full of the ghoulé, a species of land mermaid which the Persians affirmed enticed the traveller by its cries, and then tore him to pieces with his claws. The ghoulé had the faculty of changing itself into different shapes and colours; sometimes it comes in a camel's form, sometimes as a cow, then as a horse. The most efficacious spell by which they were supposed to be kept at a distance was loosening the string of their shulwars or riding breeches.”

Continuing our way from Aliabad, the magnificent caravanserai of Manzarieh is passed, eighteen miles north of Qum, with a gorgeous tile-covered facade and an emblem of the Lion and the Sun sculptured in stone. Two miles beyond it, the river Kara Su is crossed by a prodigious stone bridge, then the solitary post-house of Rahmatabad is passed. On climbing another ridge another valley opens out towards the southern end of which extends a belt of mingled brown and green, with the golden dome of Qum shining in the bright sunlight.

At a distance of eight miles, on a bearing of N46W is seen distinctly from Qum the hill of Geden Gelmez (Those who go never return—Turkish). The hill is also called the Koh-i-Telism or the Talismanic Hill, and is variously described by the natives.

“Some say that many who have attempted to explore it have never more been heard of; others say that though such had been the case years ago, yet in later days, it had been traversed in all directions, and people came from it as safe as from any other hills. The explanation is that the track consists of nitre which crumbles under foot easily after rains, and that it is dangerous to walk over it.”²

The journey from Teheran to Qum is eighty-seven miles.

Qum

The legendary founder of Qum is supposed to be Tehmurasp or Kaikobad. It came into fame as a holy city when Fatima Masuma, the sister of the Imam Reza was buried here. According to one account, Fatima lived and died here, having fled from Baghdad to escape the persecution of the Caliphs; according to another, she sickened and died at Qum while on her way to see her brother at Tus. He, for his part, is supposed to pay her a visit every Friday, from his shrine at Meshed.

Kinner in his “Memoir of Persia,” page 116, says:—

“The city of Qum was built in the year of the Hejira, 203, from the ruins of seven towns which had composed a small sovereignty under Abdul Rahman, an Arabian prince. But this person having been overthrown by his enemies, and his country ruined, the inhabitants of the seven towns founded the city of Qum, which was divided into seven departments, each assuming the name of one of the towns which had been destroyed. It afterwards became one of the first cities of Persia, and was long celebrated for its manufacture of silks.”

¹ “Journey through Persia.”

² Morier, “Journey Through Persia.”

The city was sacked by Timur, but revived again under the Sefavi Kings. The sovereigns adorned the shrine; quays adorned the river bank, and the bazaars and the caravanserais did a good trade. Unfortunately, it was completely destroyed by the Afghans in 1722. The present golden dome with the tile-encrusted minarets is the work of Feth Ali Shah. This monarch, in his early days, registered a vow that if ever he became King, he would enrich the shrine at Qum, and relieve its people of taxation. He kept his vow, and gave the city and district as a private estate to his mother: he had the tiles removed which covered the dome, and had plates of gilt copper put instead; he erected a Madrasseh with endowments and quarters for a hundred students, and built a Hospital at Qum, and a mahman khaneh or inn. He was said to have spent 100,000 tomans on the shrine¹; he always visited the place on foot, and when he died, he was buried in the courtyard of the shrine. Recently, a second dome has been gilt and a clock was erected by one of the royal princes who was Governor of Hamadan. In one of the sanctuaries is an inscription to Ali and runs thus:—"Oh, inexpressible man! By thee in truth is nature enriched and adorned! Had not thy perfect self been in the Creator's thought, Eve had remained for ever a virgin, and Adam a bachelor."

To-day Qum is the site of the second most sacred shrine in Iran; but unlike Meshed or Kerheia, the man who performs a pilgrimage to Qum cannot take a prefix to his name.

The actual shrine is preceded by several courts, the outermost of which is planted with trees. From the inner or principal court twelve steps of Tabriz marble lead up to the enclosure containing Fatima's tomb. At the entrance to the inner quadrangle is a chain. Before entrance, the chain is kissed with a "Bismillah Ah Rahman al Rahim" ("In the name of God most merciful, most compassionate"), the pious pilgrim enters the quadrangle and proceeds towards the golden dome. Three large doors, two of which are overlaid with silver plates, open into an octagonal chamber beneath the gilded dome.

Close to the twelve marble steps is a small room where the pilgrim removes his shoes and leaves his arms and staff.

Standing outside the threshold, if with the Imam, he recites the Ziarat prompted by the Imam, then kneels and kisses the threshold and enters the sanctuary. This is the only time it is necessary to do a genuflection. The tomb is enclosed by silver railings, and the pilgrim has to kiss the silver railing, east, west, north and south, and then the lock. He next goes to the opposite doorway with the Imam, and again recites the Ziarat, and returning, kisses the silver rails once again. Fees are next paid to the Mullahs, who take good care to fleece him if they think the pilgrim is a stranger of any consequence. After that, his pilgrimage is finished, and he is one step nearer Heaven.

The tomb is enclosed in a gate of massive silver, ten feet high, distant half a foot from the tomb, and at each corner crowned with large knobs of gold. Over the tomb are several silver vessels known as candil. Chardin talks of some inscriptions upon thick vellums in letters of gold that used to be there, but these have evidently been removed.

In two rooms adjoining the shrine are buried the Sefavi Kings. In the first are buried Shah Sefi I and Shah Suleiman and in the next room is Shah Abbas the Great, and further on that weak but amiable monarch, Shah Sultan Hussain, the last of the Sefavi dynasty. Outside in the courtyard

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

in two separate rooms which are only opened at certain times of the day are buried Feth Ali Shah, and Mohammed Shah of the Kajar dynasty. The bodies are enshrined in magnificent alabaster sarcophagi. The sarcophagi had the simplest possible appearance, and had no drapery even to cover them. At every tomb, the exceptionally pious pilgrim, or the one who is conducted by the Imam, had to recite verses from the Koran.

The records say that four hundred and forty-four Saints and Princes, and ten Kings are buried here. Outside the wall of the shrine is a vast necropolis, with thousands of stone slabs and crumbling mounds. Around all these riches deposited under a dome which looks like gold, are to be seen broken mud walls and arid mountains, which makes the contrast so striking.

The shrine at Qum was one of the most celebrated sanctuaries throughout Iran; here the criminal could take shelter with impunity for the asylum was inviolate. They could not be forced, but they could be starved into surrender. Hence its title of Dar-ul-Aman, or Seat of Safety.

Qum is remarkable for three things—its gilded dome, its numerous priests, and its ruins. The population is over 20,000 but the greater part of them are fanatical Sayeds, the descendants of Ali. No Zoroastrians or Jews are allowed here, and the foreigner, if non-Mahomedan, gets hostile looks from the people.

There is an Iranian proverb that says: "A dog of Kashan is better than a noble of Qum, albeit a dog is better than a man of Kashan."

In the neighbourhood of the great mosque and along the river, there are houses kept for the accommodation of visitors. Close to the mosque is a big caravanserai and garage.

The roads of Qum are clean, well-kept and broad, and there is constant motor traffic. The bazaars are vaulted throughout and consist of one vaulted alley with a few parallel and transverse aisles. A brisk trade is carried on when the town is full of pilgrims. Cheap German goods and toys can also be had. The shops are large and well furnished.

The city is famous for its melons and cucumbers, its armourers and shoemakers, and its long earthenware jars for cooling water. There is a glass factory in the town.

The place is hot in summer, and dust-storms are common in the autumn. Ophthalmia and diarrhoea prevail in summer and autumn. Small-pox too is common.

CHAPTER XXXV

QUM TO KASHAN AND ISFAHAN

FROM Qum the road goes through a broad plain with irrigated patches, passes the ruined village of Langerhut, and then enters a desert, with a range of serrated brown hills with curious statification on the east. Near the base of range of hills sixteen miles south-east of Qum is the village of Pasangan, which contains a tumbling down caravanserai, and a kava khaneh. The water here is bad and pestilential. The wells are below the ground level, and are walled and domed over (abambars).

Skirting this range, the road crosses a stream, and goes past the caravanserai of Shurab (elevation 3,080 feet). Shurab is the boundary between the provinces of Qum and Kashan, and is situated thirty-one miles from Kashan. It then winds through an arid and long pass in the range, till it debouches upon another plain, wherein is situated the caravanserai of Sin Sin, at the foot of the hills, at an elevation of about 2,820 feet. It is a village of about five hundred families and has a caravanserai. Good water is obtainable. The place was erected by the Amin-ud-Dowleh, a prominent Minister of Feth Ali Shah. Sin Sin was once a flourishing place, but was ruined by the Turkomans at the end of the eighteenth century. It is renowned for its water-melons. From here too can be seen the snowy cone of Demavend, of a rosy colour in the evening sun.

Beyond Sin Sin is a perfectly level expanse, and barren and desolate country. The little village of Kasimabad has two caravanserais, and further on is Nasirabad, a larger village with domed roofs, and a couple of minarets. On the road is a large caravanserai, with an avenue of trees near it. Water is plentiful, and the spring contains clear, limpid water.

Nearing Kashan, the villages of Aliabad and Nushabad are passed on the plain with small fruit trees and barley surrounding them, and mud caravanserais, Demavend still being seen in the distance. The whole plain is alluvial, formed of fine brown earth without a single stone, and the road is level and smooth.

The motor journey from Qum to Kashan is sixty-eight miles.

Kashan (altitude 3,260 feet).

Kashan is situated in a plain at the foot of the Kohrud Hills at the edge of the Great Salt Desert which extends to the north. Tradition ascribes the foundation to Zobeideh, the wife of Haroun-al-Raschid, but there is no doubt the town is much older and was in existence during the time of the later Sassanian monarchs. It is reported to have given 20,000 soldiers to the army of Yezdezird III, the last Sassanian King.

Kashan has been famous for five things—the industrial aptitude and cowardice of its inhabitants, its silk manufactures, its brass and copper utensils, its earthenware and its scorpions. There is a proverb in Iranian, “Wafa az Seistani, himmat az Kashani naju” (“Do not look for loyalty in a Seistani, or courage in a Kashani”).

The city is protected by mountains to the south and west, and by hills to the north-west. To the north and north-east is an open flat dusty plain.

due east is the Siah Kuh, and there is a gap in the horizon to the south-east. In former days the silk-worm was largely cultivated in the neighbourhood, and raw material imported from Resht and Gilan. Silk from Resht was spun and dyed here; then it was sent to Sultanabad to be woven into carpets, and brought back again to have the pile cut by sharp instruments. Silk carpets were only made in small sizes, but the colouring was exquisite, and the sheen and lustre unique. Unfortunately aniline dyes have crept in, and ruined the carpets. Velvet and silk are still manufactured here. Apart from its silk carpets, the woollen carpets of Kashan were supposed to be one of the best in Iran. The reverse of Kashan carpets have generally got a bluish colour.

For the domestic utensils of copper, manufactured in Kashan, the metal was originally procured from Sivas in Asiatic Turkey, via Erzeroum and Tabriz, but latterly it was imported in bars or sheets from England. Some of them are gracefully ornamented, but the majority are coarse in their manufacture.

As regards its earthenware, the word Kashi-Kari for earthenware was derived from Kashan, and this place was one of the chief centres of the Ceramic art, which died out over two hundred years ago. It is recorded that when the Afghan Mahmood destroyed Isfahan, he massacred the designers of reflets metalliques, and other Ceramic beauties, because they had created works which gave offence to the Sunni sect to which he belonged.

These reflets were not only intrinsically beautiful, but their designs were elegant, and their colouring was wonderful. There were designs in shades of brown on a lapis lazuli background, or a green on a purple background, and various other shades. Some were star shaped, some square, on which were inscribed phrases from the Koran. They look beautiful when looked at from above, but it is only on turning them sideways to the light that one sees the singular iridescence that transfigures the tiles, making them seem to gleam from within in golden purples and other colours.

The tiles are perfectly beautiful, especially when there is lapis lazuli or a canary yellow ground; and also with various shades of reds and browns, none of which are reproducible at the present day.

All valuable antiques, silk carpets, enamels on porcelain, brasswork, etc., the art of making which is lost or has degenerated, are in the hands of Jews, of whom there are a large number in Kashan.

When the Iranian wishes ill to his enemy, he wishes him to be stung by a scorpion from Kashan, or to be made Governor of Gilan. The black variety of scorpion is supposed to have a very venomous bite, and has consequently become famous. There is a tradition that the scorpions do not attack strangers. John Struys, the Dutchman, said that in order to escape these pests, the people slept in hammocks, and took an antidote made of filings of copper tempered with vinegar and honey. Another and more popular cure was the application of the oil of the scorpion itself, which was extracted by frying the insect. Olearius, the Secretary of the Holstein Embassy in 1637, was bitten by a scorpion, and derived great relief from the latter remedy. The scorpions are to be found in the cemetery, and if asked to do so, the local inhabitants will bring them in dozens. They, however, disappear underground during winter.

The Kashanis are notable cowards, and have given rise to the proverb, "A dog of Kashan is better than a noble of Qum, albeit a dog is better than

a man of Kashan." Among the many stories related about the courage of Kashanis, the best is that of the 30,000 men of Kashan and Isfahan, who, when Nadir Shah disbanded his army on his return from India, asked for an escort of a hundred musketeers to conduct them safely to their homes.

The bazaars and busy parts of the town are in the southern quarter, where are also the principal buildings, a vast caravanserai, a leaning minaret, and the Masjid-i-Maidan which contains a mehrab (prayer niche) in embossed enamel faience. The leaning minaret is over a hundred feet in height, and looks very much like a chimney from a distance. It is also called the Tower of Zein-ed-din.

Outside the city, near the mehrab shrine is the mosque of Taj-ed-din, with a blue pointed roof from which all the most beautiful tiles have been stolen by Mullahs for export to Europe.

The Madrassah-i-Shah is a Theological College, where the young future Mullahs are educated. It has a mosque with two domes adjoining it.

To the north-west of the town is the mosque known as the Panja Shah, in which the hand of one of the prophets, Nazareth Abbas, is buried. A life-size hand and portion of the forearm, carved in marble, is in a receptacle in the east wall of the mosque. The actual grave in which the real hand lies is covered with magnificent ancient tiles.

Kashan is supposed to be the hottest place on the great Iranian plateau, but has an excellent water-supply, water being brought by kanats from a reservoir in the Kohrud Mountains. Here too are numerous ice houses. Plenty of ice is to be got during the winter from the neighbouring mountains. These ice houses have a pit dug in the ground to a considerable depth, and are covered over with a high conical roof of mud. A great many of these ice houses are seen outside the city to the north-east.

Owing to the scarcity of wood, most of the arches are built of mud, and domes and arches take the place of beams. In the hot weather the inhabitants live in underground apartments.

There is some cultivation round about Kashan, principally of cotton, tobacco and melons.

There are eighteen mosques, numerous shrines, many public baths and caravanserais.

The population is about 35,000.

The climate of Kashan is very like that of Qum, healthy in the spring. Malaria and diarrhoea are prevalent in the summer and autumn, and bronchitis in the winter.

About five miles to the south-west of Kashan on the slopes of the mountains is the Fin Palace, now in a state of ruin. Shah Abbas built a residence here, but the present structure was built by Feth Ali Shah, who made it one of his favourite summer retreats, though originally intended for his brother Husain Kuli Khan. Cypress avenues, water flowing in marble canals, and jets for fountains adorned its gardens; a picture of himself and his sons hung upon the walls. The garden is surrounded by a high wall, and has buildings on three sides. There is a wide avenue of cypresses in the garden and in between are marble canals with marble tanks.

Here also is a very hot natural spring of sulphur water, and copper which is supposed to possess curative properties for rheumatism and diseases of the blood. One bath is provided for men, and another for women.

In 1852 the Fin Palace was the scene of a gruesome tragedy when Mirza Taki Khan, the Prime Minister and brother-in-law of Nasr-ed-din Shah, was put to death by the orders of the Shah. Though a man of humble birth, Mirza Taki Khan rose to fill the highest position in his country and tried to suppress intrigue and corruption. He married the Shah's only sister. One day, intrigue at the court prevailed, and his enemies gained the upper hand. He was disgraced, and sent off to the Fin Palace. By the order of the Shah, executioners were sent to murder him. When Mirza Taki Khan saw them, he knew that his end had come. He asked leave to commit suicide instead and opened the veins of his arms in a bath and bled to death. His body was sent to Kerbela for burial.

If horses can be procured, the visitor to Kashan would do well to pay a visit to the Kohrud Dam which is on the old caravan road from Kashan to Isfahan. After leaving Kashan, the track runs for a distance of sixteen miles over a stony expanse, and at the foot of the mountains turns sharply to the right and plunges into the main range. At a little distance up the pass is the ruined caravanserai of Gueberabad—a ruined settlement of the Zoroastrians. This is the last point where Demavend is seen, and from now onwards a vision of that mountain cannot be obtained. Continuing up the pass, the road enters a rocky gorge where the Bund of Ali Verdi Khan is situated. Ali Verdi Khan was the Commander-in-Chief of Shah Abbas, and builder of the famous bridge of Isfahan. This great dam completely blocks the valley from side to side, and holds up the waters of a mountain stream in spring-time, forming a large lake. The outflow of water to Kashan is regulated by a sluice. The wall is a hundred feet long, about thirty feet thick, and fifty feet high, and is at an elevation of 7,000 feet. The water used to be sold to the city of Kashan, and if it was not paid for, the supply was stopped by blocking up the hole in the dam.

Four miles beyond this dam is the village of Kohrud, which in summer-time was considered a paradise. It is a hamlet with houses built one above the other in tiers upon the side of the hill. Kohrud is famous for its fruit and its orchards are full of apple, pear, walnut and palm trees.

The old motor and caravan road to Isfahan passed from here to Natanz, but it has completely fallen into desrepair, and the only way to proceed by motor to Isfahan is to return to Qum, cross the Qum River, and proceed on an exceedingly good motor road most of the way, doing a distance of one hundred and sixty-four miles from Qum in less than five hours. The scenery is uninteresting, and except for the villages passed on the way, there is nothing to see, as the road goes along a plain all the way.

The first town of importance passed on the way is fifty-three miles south of Qum, the open town of Dalijan, having a population of about 2,000 souls. Here there is quite a good garage, with a bala khaneh of about four rooms, meals being served from a kava khaneh near by. The garage is very comfortable. There is also another restaurant called the "Gasteeneetsa Atlas" (Atlas Restaurant), which is not very clean. There are extensive tobacco fields near Dalijan. Opposite the town on the left bank of the Jaab River is a hot medicinal spring said to cure cutaneous disorders.

Just outside Dalijan the roads divide, the left going to Isfahan, the right being a good motor road to Gulpaigan. The village of Robat Turk

where malaria is endemic, a small hamlet of about forty houses within brick walls is next passed, and then comes the big town of Mehmeh at an elevation of 6,670 feet. This town has about four hundred houses, and has extensive gardens watered by kanats. There is a good caravanserai here for travellers. From Mehmeh, the road becomes more or less a track as far as Murchekhur (elevation 5,630 feet).

Murchekhur, thirty miles north of Isfahan, is situated in a plain surrounded with cultivation, and bounded on the south by high mountains. It contains about two hundred and fifty houses, and a mud-built fort, and gardens which produce fruits of various kinds. Cotton, barley, and wheat are also cultivated here. The place has a big caravanserai.

Near Murchekhur, on the 13th November 1729 Nadir Shah inflicted a decisive defeat on the Afghans under Ashraf. The Afghans were soon finally expelled from the country. Here also, in 1785, died Ali Murad Khan, who reigned for four years in the anarchy that succeeded the death of Kerim Khan Zend.

A short rise from Murchekhur leads past the Mader-i-Shah caravanserai. This caravanserai was built of brick upon a foundation of bluish stone by the mother of Shah Abbas, and stands on the ridge that separates the plain of Murchekhur from that of Isfahan. On nearing Gaz, the track is over undulating country for a time, and then goes over a flat plain to Isfahan. To a traveller approaching Isfahan from the north, the famous pigeon towers first come into view, and can be seen from a long way off. As the road goes very close to some of these towers, it will be worth his while to get down and inspect one of them before proceeding to the city. A description of them will be given in the next chapter.



WEST SIDE OF THE MAIDAN-I-SHAH

From a photograph by Ernest Bristow, Esq.



GATE OF ALI KAPI AND TALAR.

CHAPTER XXXVI

ISFAHAN—*Elevation 5,100 feet*

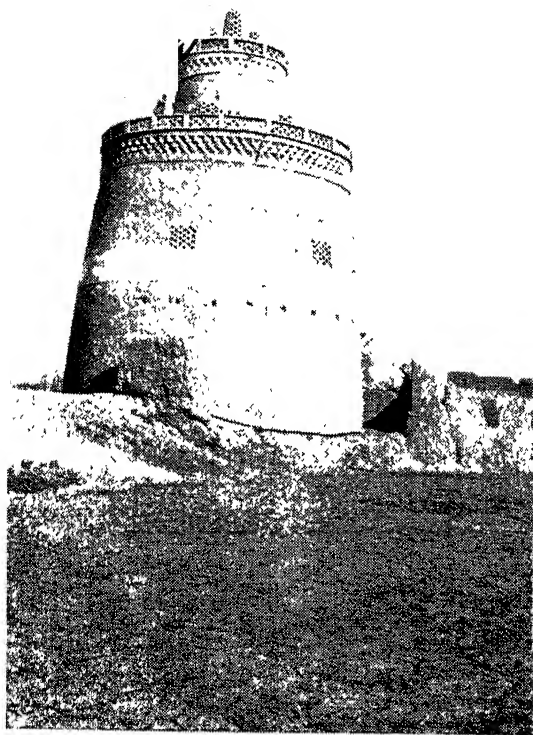
"Isfahan nush Jehan" (*"Isfahan is half the World"*)

Iranian saying.

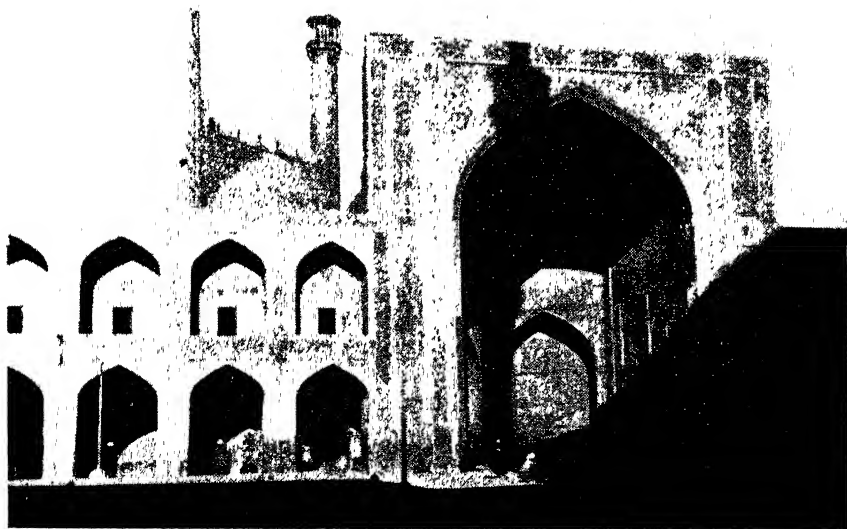
THE origin of the name Isfahan is uncertain, but it is perhaps derived from the family name of Feraidan, who were called Aspaiyan in the Pehlavi dialect.

Under the Achæmenian Kings, a city called Gabal existed on this site. In A.D. 228, Ardeshir Babegan reduced Isfahan. Later on, during Sassanian times, the town seems to have been known under the name of Jai and was captured by Omar in A.D. 641 after the battle of Nehavend. About A.D. 931 the city, then known as Isfahan, passed into the hands of the Buyah dynasty who ruled as petty princes in Fars and Iraq. The city then had two quarters, known as the Yehudieh or Jews' quarter, and Shehristan, the city proper, which later on were united within a single wall. El-Istakhri who visited the place in the tenth century, described Isfahan as a flourishing place renowned for its silks and fine linen. In 1016 Mahmud of Ghazni sacked the city and destroyed its inhabitants in a series of appalling massacres. Isfahan was next besieged and taken by Toghrul Beg, a Seljuk sovereign. In A.D. 1052 the city occupied a walled space about fourteen miles in circumference and had quite recovered. It was pillaged again by Chengiz Khan, and once more by Timur, who in revenge for an attack made by the citizens upon the garrison he had placed in the city, ordered a general massacre, and 70,000 heads were piled up in pyramids of skulls. In the latter part of the fifteenth century "Spahaun" or Isfahan was ruled by Uzun Hassan of the White Sheep dynasty. It was then that the Venetians, Josephus Barbaro and Contarini, came to this place.

Isfahan rose to the zenith of its splendour in the reign of Shah Abbas the Great. This monarch, having fallen ill in Teheran from a surfeit of fruit, vowed he would never visit the place again, and transferred his capital to Isfahan. The contemporary of Elizabeth in England, of Akbar in India, of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, and of Henry IV of France, he turned Isfahan into the finest and most romantic cities of the East. It was at this time that foreign Embassies and other foreigners visited Isfahan. In the time of Shah Abbas II there were one hundred and thirty-seven royal palaces in different parts of the city, given up to the entertainment of foreign Ambassadors, and notables. In one part of the city was a tower sixty feet high by twenty feet thick, called the Kaleh Minar, made up of the horns and skulls of wild animals slain by earlier monarchs. Olearius mentions that there were the heads of two thousand stags and gazelles that were killed at one hunting by Shah Tahmasp. In the bazaar near the Great Maidan was a factory of the British East India Company. In the same maidan there used to be feats of wrestling, polo matches, and combats of animals, including the lion. All this came to an end in 1722, when the Afghans conquered Isfahan and deposed Shah Sultan Hussain. It was then that their beloved Zindeh Rud was choked with corpses, and hungry mothers devoured their children, and the conquerors after massacring everybody on whom they could lay hands, surrendered the city to an indiscriminate carnage. The Afghans destroyed palaces, avenues, gardens and everything they could lay their hands on. This misery was ended in 1729, when Nadir Shah defeated



PIGEON TOWER



INTERIOR OF THE MASJID-I-SHAH.

the Afghans, and drove them out. When Nadir Shah entered Isfahan, the remains of Sultan Mahmood were abandoned by him to the fury of the populace, and the edifice raised over his body was levelled to the ground, and the place where he had been interred was converted into a common sewer to receive the filth of the city. In the same year 1729, Ashraff before he fled from Isfahan murdered Sultan Hussain. He, however, transferred the capital to Meshed. Kerim Khan shifted the capital to Shiraz, and Aga Mohammed Shah to Teheran, demolishing the fortifications of Isfahan at the same time. Feth Ali Shah died at Isfahan in the Aineh Khaneh in 1834. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was ruled by the Zil-es-Sultan, the elder brother of Muzafferuddin Shah. In 1909, Isfahan revolted against the Shah in favour of a constitution. The Bakhtiaris left Isfahan, and advanced to Teheran, which they occupied in July, in company with the Nationalists from the north. They secured their constitution. In July 1910, the British Consul of Shiraz was attacked on the road to Isfahan and two Indian sowars were killed. There were serious disturbances in the town, and seven months later, the Governor of Isfahan and his nephew were shot by Russian subjects.

As mentioned before, approaching the city from the north, the pigeon towers come into view. They are a number of large circular towers, with smaller turrets projecting from their summits, sixty to seventy feet in total height, planted as a rule near gardens. They are erected for the preservation of their droppings. The towers contain an infinite number of cells, and a well in the middle for collecting the manure. The manure is spread upon melon beds in the surrounding fields. The pigeons go out in the day-time and return at night and the towers are cleaned out about once a year.

The most convenient way of seeing Isfahan is to start from the Maidan-i-Shah, which is the centre of the city. The Maidan-i-Shah¹ (or Royal Square) used to be one of the most imposing squares in the world. It was laid out, and surrounded by buildings by Shah Abbas, and here took place all the royal pageants in his day, polo matches, target shooting, wrestling matches, etc. The King's Palace, the bazaars, and the principal mosques opened on to it. The maidan is five hundred and sixty yards in length, by one hundred and seventy-four yards in width. On one side there are a long low range of brick buildings, divided into two storeys of recessed arches one above the other. In olden days, the lower storeys were shops, while the upper ones which consisted of chambers with balconies were used by the spectators. As time went on, these chambers were used as barracks, and now they are entirely deserted. In Sefavi times, in the centre of this maidan stood a may-pole, about twenty-five feet high, on which was usually placed an apple or melon, and on rare occasions a cup of gold, to be shot at by archers passing at full gallop below. Later on, an execution pole replaced the may-pole, which had notches on the side, by which the culprit was hanged by the heels, and either had his throat cut or was dashed to the ground. This too has disappeared. The ancient things that still survive in that square are two great basins of water with porphyry coping, and two marble columns on either side which served as goal-posts in the game of chaugan (or polo), so popular with the nobility of those days. Out of the old bazaars that used to be there, all that remains now are a few stalls at the northern extremity.

On a recess stands a portico flanked by arched galleries, and opening into the main bazaar. This is the Nakkareh-Khaneh or Drum Tower of Isfahan ; originally here there was music at sundown : in the galleries looking

¹ See illustration on page 203.

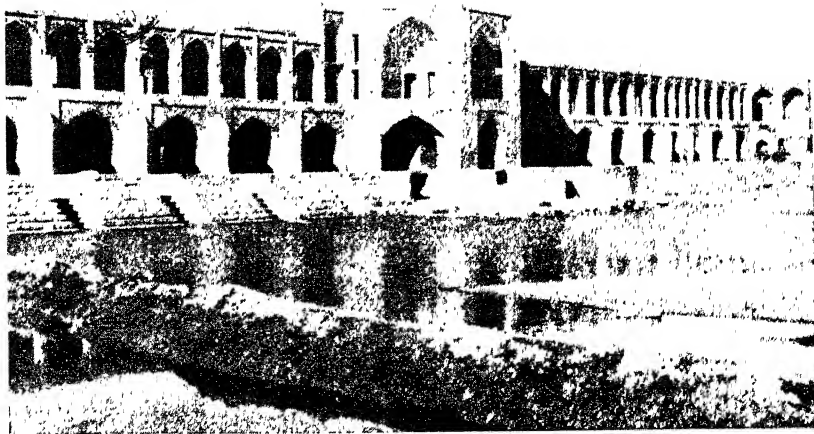
into the square, people used to smoke their hukahs and drink their coffee; and here some Mullahs were deputed by Shah Abbas to talk philosophy. Above the main arch used to be a clock supposed to have been made by an Englishman for Shah Abbas. The Englishman having unfortunately been killed by an Iranian, the clock has remained out of order ever since. Above the clock was a bronze bell taken from the Portuguese nunnery at Ormuzd. In 1808, it was removed by Haji Mohammed Hussain, Amin-ed-Dowleh and Beglerbeg of Isfahan under Feth Ali Shah, under pretext of repairing the fresco in the archway, and eventually melted for cannon.

On the eastern side of the square is the mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah, its dome being covered with ancient blue enamelled tiles, with a flowing pattern.

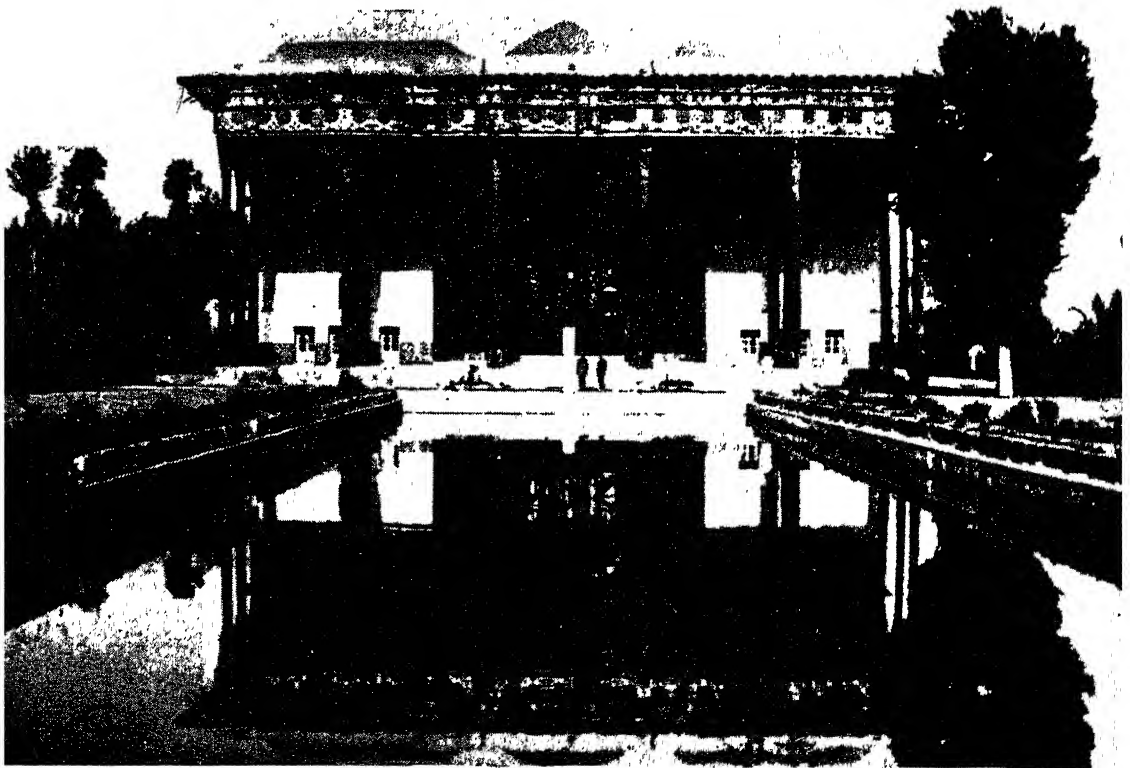
On the southern side is the Masjid-i-Shah or Royal Mosque. It was erected in 1612-13 on the site of a melon garden by Shah Abbas, and at a cost of £175,000 sterling. It was originally intended as a Friday Mosque or the Masjid-i-Juma. Shah Sefi I covered its doors with silver plates. Inside were preserved the blood-stained shirt of Hussein, and a Koran written by the Imam Reza. The mosque was restored by Nadir Shah, after he reconquered Isfahan from the Afghans, and again by Ali Murad Khan. The entrance is through a porch on the south side. Above the porch is a lofty archway honeycombed with enamelled faience, and surrounded by tile inscriptions from the Koran. There are two minarets on either side with spiral bonds of similar ornamentation. The construction of the mosque is peculiar, for the axis of the meridian is due north and south, while the axis of the mosque is inclined to the south-west in order that the mehrab should be turned in the direction of Mecca. The inner court is marble-paved, and surrounded by a two-storeyed arcade, with bands of Cufic inscription in tile work, white letters on a blue ground. The arches are for the accommodation of priests and attendants. On either side is a lofty arch in which there is access to a space covered by a low dome. A third archway opposite the entrance, and flanked by minarets, leads into the mosque proper, which is covered by the dome, whose exterior is covered with tiles containing patterns in dark blue and green arabesques on an azure ground. On either side of the shrine are courts with basins and porticoes. On the summit of one of the arches is a cage for the Muezzin's call to prayer, the minarets never being used for that purpose for the Kings were afraid that from the summit of the minarets too much might be seen of their seraglio.

On the western side of the maidan is a building overlooking the square with a verandah in the forepart supported by wooden columns, while the hinder part is elevated three storeys higher. This is the talar of the old Royal Palace, and the porch below is known as the Gate of Ali Kapi.¹ There is a tradition that Shah Abbas carried off this gate entire from the tomb of Ali at Nejef in Mesopotamia, and replaced it by a substitute. In the Sefavi days it was a sacred gate, and no one except the sovereign could drag a fugitive from there, and then too, only by starvation. All those who received the King's favour had to kiss the gate. The verandah above is supported by twelve wooden pillars, and contains a marble basin in the centre. Here the King gave audience to the Ambassadors at Nao Ruz, and here he sat to witness the polo tournaments and other entertainments in the Maidan-i-Shah. The Gate of Ali Kapi led to the gardens and pavilions of the Royal Palace, which extended from the gateway to the avenue of the Chehar Bagh, and were about four and a half miles in circuit. At the present day, the buildings and pavilions are used as barracks, and the famous palace of the Chihil Situn, as the offices of the military.

¹ See illustration on page 203.



THE PUL-I-KHAJU.



CHIHIL SUTUN.

By kind permission of the Iran League.

The Chihil Situn or the Forty Pillars was the principal Talar where the King gave audience to Ambassadors and received his Ministers in levee. The hall is situated at the end of a large garden, and in front of it is a tank. It was originally built by Shah Abbas, but the greater portion was destroyed by fire in the reign of Shah Sultan Hussain, one hundred years later. The latter monarch, unduly superstitious, regarded the flames as a dispensation of Providence, and refused to interfere with them, but when they had fulfilled their divine mission, he started rebuilding the edifice.

The palace is divided into two sections, the open Throne Hall, and the Picture Hall behind it. The roof of the Throne Hall is flat, and some of the rafters contain bales of entire chenars or planes, seven feet round. Its twenty octagonal columns were once inlaid with Venetian mirrors. The interior columns rested on groups of stone lions each facing outwards. Originally the four central pillars stood at the angles of a marble basin into which the lions spouted water from their mouths. The basin has been filled in now. The columns still display the bases of the grinning lions carved in stone. The bases are chipped off and damaged, the glass almost all gone, and the foundations of the columns are ornamented with painted flowers, red in blue vases. The floor is paved with brick, and there is a raised platform for the throne, reached by four stone steps.

Behind the verandah is the Talar or Throne Room, and behind this on a higher level is a deeply recessed compartment where stood the throne. There is a frieze here of floral decoration with gold leaves. The end receptacle is ornamented with Venetian-looking glasses cut in small triangles, and it has a pretty ceiling of artichoke leaf pattern capitals.

The ceiling above the upper platform is made entirely of mirrors with adornments in blue and gold and glass, representing the sky, the sun and golden lions. The ceiling above the colonnade is painted blue, gold, red and green and the vaulting of the recess is honeycombed. On either side of the Throne Room are compartments originally intended for the King's Ministers.

Behind the talar, and communicating with it by three doors, is a great hall, extending the entire length of the building, and crowned by three cupolas. This is the Picture Gallery with six oil-paintings, three on either side. Over the door, on the wall facing the entrance, are three of the six panels. One of these represents Shah Ismail, wearing a white turban, riding a white horse, and carrying a good supply of arrows engaged in combat with the Janissaries of Sultan Suleman. The Shah is slicing the Agha of the Janissaries in twain.

The next picture is that of Shah Tahmasp entertaining the refugee Indian Prince Humayun, at a banquet in 1543. The two Kings are kneeling upon a dais, around which are disposed the singers and orchestra, the body-guard and royal falconers, with the birds perched on their wrists; while in the foreground are two Bokhara dancing girls performing with gestures. The lower part is in good preservation, but the upper part has been patched up.

The third picture to the right of the door depicts Shah Abbas with Abdul Mohammed Khan of the Usbegs. The King is holding out his cup for more wine and is seated upon his knees in a red tunic and turban, while an inebriated guest is lying in a state of extreme intoxication on the floor, with a flask pressed to his lips. In the background are royal attendants.

This picture is said to contain a likeness of Ali Verdi Khan, his celebrated Generalissimo. In the foreground is a graceful dancing girl in red and green robes, with a waist band and flowing hair. There is a graceful twist in the waist. To the left of the picture are the musicians and the followers of the Shah. To the right is a tambourine figure. Fruit and other refreshments lie in profusion in vessels on the floor.

Shah Abbas I, surnamed the Great, was a man of great pluck, but unfortunately given to drunkenness and licentiousness, and had brutal qualities in him. The story of the Shatir's tomb at Lasgird was characteristic of this monarch's brutality. It was he also who blinded many of his relations by placing red hot iron in front of their eyes. Considering this too lenient a punishment, he ordered their eyes to be extracted altogether.

On the near wall are three corresponding panels. In one of these Shah Ismail, at the head of his cavalry, is engaged in conflict with the Uzbek tartars. It is probably meant to commemorate the great successes of Ismail at the battle of Khoi against Salim. Some say that it commemorates Ismail's successes in Khorassan, Samarkand and Tashkend. There are a crowd of Bokhara warriors, and Afghans are the secondary figures.

To the left of the front door is Shah Abbas entertaining Khalif Sultan, Ambassador from the Great Mogul. There is the usual accompaniment of musicians and dancing girls, tambourines and castanets. This picture is rectangular and is the best preserved of the lot.

The last picture in the centre facing the entrance door represents the battle between Nadir Shah and Sultan Mahmood (mounted on a white elephant), that decided the fate of Delhi. Nadir Shah is represented on horseback with a great following of elephants and turbaned figures. It was this great conqueror who extended the Iranian boundary to the Indus to the south and to the Oxus on the north.

To these ancient pictures is added another one, a modern portrait of Nasr-ed-din Shah, painted in European style, in oil-colours, wearing a gaudy uniform with gold and diamonds.

The ceiling of this hall is magnificent. It has three domes, the centre one more lofty than the two side ones. The higher dome is gilt, and is most gracefully ornamented with a leaf pattern and twelve gold stars, while the two other cupolas are blue with a leaf ornamentation in gold. Some corners are coloured gold, blue and green, while other corners have red and light blue, with sides of green and gold.

The hall is lighted by three windows at each end near the lower arch of the side domes, and three more double windows under them. There is one main entrance and three exits towards the Throne Room.

Among the other pavilions in the Palace enclosure may be mentioned the Sar Puchideh, a hall of which the octagonal pillars encrusted with glass, rest upon the shoulders of female figures in marble, themselves holding lions' heads which spout water into a basin; the Imarat-i-Ashraf built by the Afghan usurper; the Imarat-i-Nau built for Feth Ali Shah by the Amin-ed-Dowleh; and the Talar-i-Tavileh or Hall of the Stables.

On the extreme western side, opening on to the Chehar Bagh, are a garden and building. These are the Hasht Behesht or Eight Paradises. It

was built by Shah Suleiman in about 1670. The garden in which it was built was originally called Bagh-i-Bulbul or Garden of the Nightingale. The chief building is a pavilion standing in the centre of a large enclosure. The pavilion fell into decay, but was restored by Feth Ali Shah, who in the main hall covered by a dome, and surrounded by galleries with small chambers in the angles, had oil-paintings made of himself, seated in state with his court, or mounted on horseback spearing a lion. There was also a picture of Istar-jee or Strachey, the English Adonis.¹ The Hasht Behesht stands in a garden laid out in parterres, planted with fruit trees and avenues and bordered with cypresses and chenars. At the time of my visit, the Army Commander's wife was staying there, and no one could go in without special permission.

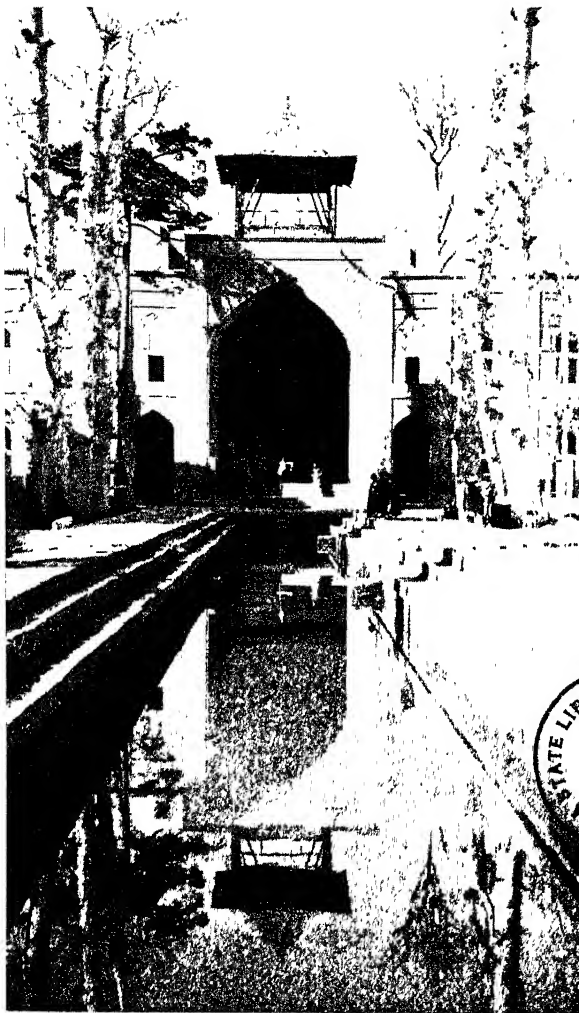
The Hasht Behesht opens on to the Chehar Bagh, the great avenue of Isfahan, which conducts from the centre of the city to the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh, otherwise known as the Bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, a distance of about 1,400 yards. Its site was originally occupied by four vineyards which Shah Abbas rented at 9,000 francs per year. The avenue to-day is in a state of utter decay. At the height of its splendour, the Chehar Bagh was a magnificent avenue. Water conducted in stone channels ran down the centre, falling in cascades from terrace to terrace, and was collected in square and octagonal basins where cross-roads cut the avenue. On either side of the central channel were a row of chenars and a paved pathway for pedestrians. Then came a row of open parterres, planted or sown, and on either side was a second row of chenars, between which and the flanking walls was a raised causeway for horsemen. The total breadth was fifty-two yards. Various royal gardens stretched on either side, and arched doorways with recessed open chambers overhead conducted through these walls into the gardens. Some of the pavilions were used as coffee houses, and all the elite of Isfahan used to assemble here, and strive "to outvie each other in pomp and generosity." Quays lined the river banks at the bottom of the avenue and were bordered with the mansions of the nobility.

The channels are now empty, their stone borders crumbled and shattered, the terraces are broken down, there is no sign of the side pavilions, and the gardens have gone back to primæval wilderness. Yet the Chehar Bagh is a favourite place of promenade to-day for the people of Isfahan, when their day's work is over. In the centre of the avenue is the motor road, and poplar and sycamore trees on either side, then a footpath lined with shops.

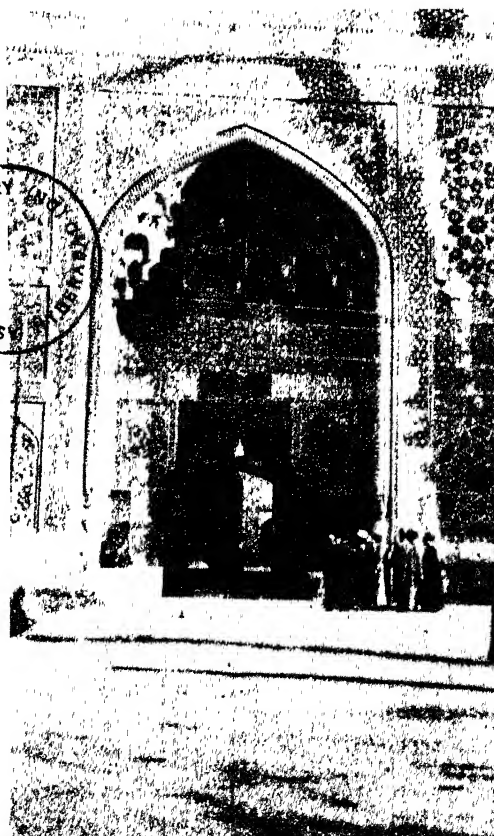
Towards the upper end of the Chehar Bagh, on the eastern side is the Chehar Bagh Hotel. On the same side is the entrance to the Hasht Behesht. About half-way down is the famous Madrasseh-i-Shah Hussain, and opposite to it on the western side is the Hotel d'Amerique, kept by an Armenian, the best and most comfortable hotel in all Iran.

The Madrasseh-i-Shah Hussain was built by Shah Sultan Hussain about the year 1710, as a monastery for the Derwishes. It has a massive handsome silver gate in a somewhat dilapidated condition at present. At the entrance are fluted tiled columns with alabaster bases in the shape of vases some ten feet in height, while on top is a frieze of blue tiles with inscriptions from the Koran. The archway is recessed with honeycomb decoration, and leads into a dome-covered portico, and thence into the main court of the Madrasseh, which contains long basins filled with water, and is planted with

¹ Curzon, "Persia."



From a photograph by Ernest Bristow, Esq.
 INTERIOR OF THE MADRASSEH-I-SHAH SULTAN HUSSAIN.



MADRASSEH-I-SHAH SULTAN HUSSAIN.

flower beds and overshadowed with trees. On the right-hand side is the mosque covered with a green-tiled dome, surmounted with a knob supposed to be of solid gold, and flanked by two minarets full of grace and refined in colour with lattice work at their summit.

In the centre of the remaining sides are arched chambers. Two storeys of arched cells for the students extend all round, and the corners are cut off by recessed arches. Round the base of the walls is a wainscoting of Yezd marble, and above this, the archways, recesses and lintels of facades are covered with tiles and panels of enamelled arabesque.

There are one hundred and sixty rooms in the college for students. The buildings have two storeys, and all have tiled fronts, with white verandahs. The students devote most of their time to theological studies, and also in a minor degree to geography and history.

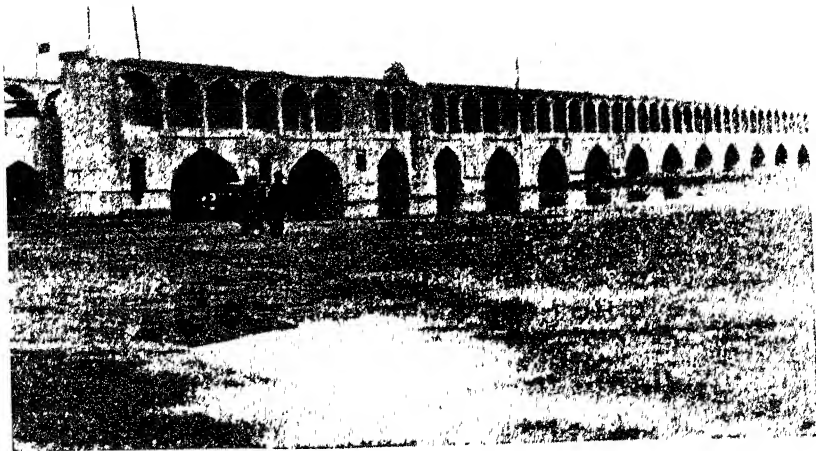
The walls all around are built of large green tiles with designs of curves and of leaf pattern ; or with white ornamentations, curves and yellow circles on a dark blue ground. Other courts have handsome tiles with flower patterns.

There are some fine old trees in the courts.

At the other end of the Chehar Bagh stands the bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, now known as the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh. The bridge is approached at the north end under a gateway by a paved ramp. The length of the bridge is three hundred and eighty-eight yards, and the breadth of the paved roadway is thirty feet. On either side in the outer wall of the bridge is a narrow pathway, two and a half feet in width, running along the whole length of the bridge, and communicating with the main roadway by frequent arches. On the outer side are ninety arches opening on to the river view. In some places, this gallery for pedestrians opens into larger chambers, which in the days of Shah Abbas II were adorned by paintings. At the corners of the bridge are round towers, with steps inside, which lead to an upper pathway. Upon these towers are planted the telegraph wires to Julfa. There are staircases cut in the basements of the towers, and at regular distances in the main piers, which conduct to a lower storey where a vaulted passage runs along the entire length of the bridge through arches pierced in the central piers, crossing the channel of the river by stepping stones planted in its bed. On top of all is an open footpath. There is thus a triple promenade on this bridge---the vaulted passage below, the motor road and the galleries above, and an open footpath on the top of that. The upper part of the bridge is brick, the towers and piers being of stone.

Formerly this bridge opened immediately upon another avenue which was a continuation of the Chehar Bagh on the south bank of the river. This was a counterpart of the Chehar Bagh, and was planted with rows of trees, channels of water that fell in cascades from tier to tier, and at intervals entered larger basins or pools. On either side were situated the mansions of the nobles and princes, and at the upper end was a royal enclosure known as the Hesar Jerrib or 1,000 Acres. It was laid out in terraces, built on stone walls one above the other, and adorned with alleys and canals. It was Crown property but open to the public.¹ Not a trace of this remains.

After crossing the bridge and turning to the left, we pass the old suburb of Gueberistan, which was inhabited by the Zoroastrians. The ground was, however, cleared by Shah Abbas II, who converted it into a royal residence,



THE PUL-I-CHEHAR BAGH.

where he kept his seraglio, and which he called Sadekabad, or Abode of Felicity. The actual building of the harem was known as the Haft Dast, the Seven Suites or Compartments. The Haft Dast is now turned into a factory, and permission is required to visit it. In one of the lower chambers of the Haft Dast, surrounded by a wainscoting of Tabriz marble, and adorned with a marble cistern, Feth Ali Shah died in 1834. The bank of the river from here to the Pul-i-Khaju was lined with trees, and by damming up the sluice-gates at the lower bridge, a great lake formed near the talar known as the Aineh Khaneh, and the King was in the habit of going out in boats with his ladies. The whole lake was illuminated at night. Close to the Haft Dast was a talar known as the Aineh Khaneh, very like the Chihil Situn. A basin occupied the centre, and a second stood in the Throne Room at the back, behind which were several chambers adorned with paintings of Shah Abbas and his Circassian ladies. In the garden at the back was a pavilion known as the Nimak-Dan. Both these have been pulled down, and not a trace now remains of either of them.

A little below the Haft Dast, the Zindeh Rud is spanned by the Pul-i-Khaju.¹ This bridge was originally known under several names. It was the Pul-i-Gueberabad or the Bridge of the Guebres, because it led to the suburb of Gueberistan, and was built by Shah Abbas II to stop the Guebres passing across the main bridge to Julfa. It is also called the Pul-i-Hasanabad, because it led to the bazaar of that name in Isfahan, which was restored by the Governor of Isfahan, under Feth Ali Shah. The Pul-i-Khaju is one hundred and fifty-four yards in length, and consists of a bridge superimposed upon a dam. The dam is built of solid blocks of stone and is pierced by narrow channels, through which water can be regulated by sluices. The stones are arranged in steps descending to the river level. The platform is broken on its outer edge. The bridge has twenty-four main arches which rest on the platform. In addition to the arches, there are four projecting hexagonal pavilions one at each corner, and two larger ones in the centre. On the roof of the more westerly of the two is a third storey. There is a vaulted passage running the entire length of the bridge through the piers on the top of the dam, and crossing the successive channels by stepping-stones six feet deep. The roadway on the bridge is twenty-four feet broad, and has a covered gallery on either side leading to the hexagonal pavilions and opening by a succession of arches on to the river view. On the top is a terrace walk which was originally protected by a double parapet and screens. The spandrels of the arches have modern tiles. The pavilions were once adorned with paintings, and with panels containing inscriptions, but these do not exist now.

On both these bridges, the inhabitants of Isfahan come out in the evenings for their promenade.

Recrossing the bridge to the north bank of the Zindeh Rud, there is an avenue like the one at Chehar Bagh, but in a greater state of decay. The avenue leads to the bazaars, and was planted by the same Governor of Isfahan who restored the Pul-i-Khaju.

The bazaars of Isfahan are very fine, though many of them are being broken up now, and new ones taking their place. From the main avenues open out immense courts or caravanserais. There are miles of bazaar roofed over in long arcades to protect the shops from the sun in summer and from the rain and snow in winter. The height of the arcade is from thirty to sixty feet, the more ancient ones being lower than the modern ones. It

¹ See illustration on page 208.

is possible to walk under cover in them for two or three miles together. The trades are all collected in separate bodies which makes it convenient to purchasers.

The goldsmiths' and silversmiths' shops are not very numerous in the bazaars. The work is generally done on good gold or silver of pure quality. The old enamelled work on silver has completely disappeared.

In the middle of the bazaars is the tomb of the Imamzadeh Ahmed with a stone lion in the middle of the courtyard.

In another part, close to the bazaars, is the Masjid-i-Jama or Friday Mosque, said to have been built by Abbas Khalif el Mansur in A.D. 755. Malek Shah, the Seljuk, restored the mosque, and so did Shah Tahmasp and Shah Abbas II, but after the erection of the Masjid-i-Shah by Shah Abbas the Great, this mosque took a secondary place. Its minarets and quadrangles are in a state of decay. From one of its vaulted archways, a passage leads to the tomb of Mujtahid Majlissi, a High Priest of the Sefavi period.

The chief manufactures of Isfahan are chiselled brasswork, bowls, vases, trays and ornaments; painted pen cases, and mirror cases, and painted and varnished book racks. Isfahan is also celebrated for its stamped hand dyes on cotton fabrics imported from England, and also for its kadaks, a sort of nankin much used in dress. Silk carpets too are manufactured here. Formerly Isfahan was noted for its armour, but there is very little of that done now.

Coming out of the bazaars by a high gate, tiled with flower ornamentations, the traveller comes back to the northern side of the Maidan-i-Shah. This gateway has three lower windows, and a triple upper one, and a doorway under the projecting painted archway. To the right of the entrance as one looks at it, is a three-storeyed building as high as the gate of the bazaar. It has an upper verandah, the roof of which is supported on transverse sets of three wooden columns each, except the outer corner roof supports, which are square and of bricks.

No description of Isfahan could be complete without a description of the Zindeh Rud. The river rises in the Kuh-i-Rang in the Bakhtiari Mountains. Rapid in its upper course, entering the plain of Lahijan to the southwest of Isfahan, it carves out a wider bed for itself. Here its waters are largely taken away for irrigation. It then passes through Isfahan, a swirling torrent in spring, but with very little water in the winter. Below Isfahan it fertilises the districts of Berahan and Rudesht, and here its flow is regulated by the bunds of Ali Kuli Khan and Merwan. The waters which remain are swallowed up in the Gavkhaneh Marsh. The Zindeh Rud is like the Barada at Damascus. Both these rivers run through towns and are lost in a marsh.

At Isfahan, the river is crossed by five bridges. Highest up the stream, and most ancient is the Pul-i-Mamun which was built by Shah Tahmasp, who reigned from A.D. 1523-1575. This bridge used to conduct to the Mahomedan suburb of Mamun, west of Julfa. The Armenians call it the Sarfaraz Bridge, and say it was built by one of their own countrymen. The bridge is made of brick and has arches of different sizes and shapes, resting on piers of roughly hewn stone.

Next is the bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, better known as the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh; then the Pul-i-Jhubi, a brick bridge of fourteen arches constructed as an aqueduct to convey water to the Palace of Haft Dast. Next is the

Pul-i-Khaju, and the lowest of the bridges is the Pul-i-Shahristan, which is now in ruins, and which leads to the village of that name, once the residence of the nobles. The foundations and piers of the bridge are made of stone, and the superstructure of a later date of brick.

The population of Isfahan numbers 85,000 souls, many of whom are Jews. The Jews of Isfahan have been subjected to a great deal of oppression. There is a story that Timur Lang was riding past a synagogue in Isfahan, where the Masjid-i-Ali now stands, and the Jews made such a horrible noise at their prayers (in saying the "Shema Israel" on the day of Atonement) that his horse bolted, and he was thrown off it, and lamed. Hence his name. A terrible massacre of the Jews followed.¹

The Jews are about 6,000 in number, and are mostly pedlars and beggars. There are a few jewellers, and traders in precious stones, brokers and wine-sellers.

Isfahan is also noted for its melons. The dung of pigeon is the dearest manure that the Iranians use; and the droppings are exclusively used for the rearing of melons. The melons are sweeter and finer than those of other cities.

Isfahan is the seat of a British Consulate-General.

¹ Landor, "Across Coveted Lands."

CHAPTER XXXVII

SUBURBS OF ISFAHAN

SOUTH of the Zindeh Rud, a little to the west of the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh, extends the Armenian suburb of Julfa, inhabited by a Christian colony over three hundred years old.

The place is of historic interest. In 1604, Shah Abbas the Great, with the idea of teaching the Iranians the habits of trading, sagacity and thrift, carried off the whole population of Julfa on the Araxes, and brought them to the banks of the Zindeh Rud, giving them the best lands in the neighbourhood of Isfahan. Some years later Julfa was a flourishing place, and had a population of 40,000 inhabitants. It became a great trading city, and was renowned for the making of watches and jewellery. Its agriculturists became market-gardeners for the city of Isfahan. Their prosperity was short lived. Shah Suleiman systematically overtaxed and persecuted the Armenians. Shah Sultan Hussain promulgated a decree that if an Iranian killed an Armenian, the penalty was payment of one load of corn to the family of the deceased. The worst punishments came under Nadir Shah, who alleged that the Armenians had helped the Afghans. Savage penalties were inflicted upon them, and they were placed under a ban of social ostracism. On his death in 1747, many of them went to Georgia, India and Baghdad.

The population of Julfa now is about 4,000.

The Armenians are under the spiritual jurisdiction of a monk from Echmiadzin, who resides close to the cathedral in a building originally a convent. There is a nunnery attached to the place, and the duty of the nuns is to visit the sick, teach and knit socks. The majority of the Armenians work as carpenters, gardeners, etc. The Hotel d'Amerique, the best hotel in Iran, is owned by an Armenian, who also had a cinema going in the hotel. The Iranians, however, refused to go to the cinema because it was owned by a Christian. The Armenians are hospitable, and good-natured, and have good business capacities. The majority of them speak several languages, but amongst themselves they speak their own native tongue. Drunkenness is their chief vice, and many of them manufacture liquor. Dr. Wills, who lived in Julfa many years, said that his Armenian cook would say to him on a Sunday night: "Dinner finished, sir: if you no orders, I go get drunk with my priest."

The cathedral was built by the colonists of Shah Abbas. In the courtyard is the belfry. Four stone pillars support a brick gallery with a railing, and above this is the bell pulled by a rope. In the courtyard are a number of graves, and on some of them are depicted human figures. A man called Rustam had been murdered, and the execution scene is sculpted over his grave. Immediately outside the church are a number of small cells. The main building consists of the nave, the choir beneath a dome, and a semi-circular apse at the end. Ornamental tiles run round the base of the walls, and above them are old oil-paintings, presented by an Armenian merchant named Avadich, who had travelled in Italy. Over the door is a picture of the Day of Judgment. On top are the angels, while below are the evil ones thrown into hell, by devils and monsters. The apse is painted with a figure of Christ, and miniature saints.

In Julfa, besides the Armenians, there are some Catholic Armenians, a Church of England Mission, and a small European colony. The town is walled and entered by a big gate, the streets are narrow with winding alleys.

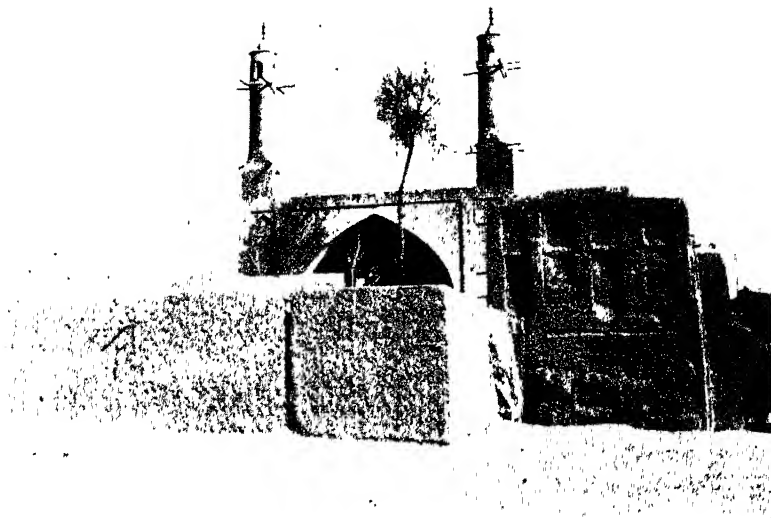
Between Julfa and the Kuh-i-Suffa is a barren stony plain, where there is a big cemetery. Here are the graves not only of Armenians but of many Europeans—English, French, Dutch and Russian—who lived and died at Isfahan. Some of the tombstones date back to the sixteenth century. Among the gravestones is one bearing the inscription “Cy git Rodolfe” (“Here lies Rodolfe”). Rodolph Stadler was a Swiss watchmaker, a great friend of Shah Sefi I. A native of Zurich, he had accompanied the Mission from the Duke of Holstein to Iran, and became watchmaker to Sefi I, who on the whole was kind to Christians. Rodolph slew an Iranian, whom he found in his house, and suspected of being too intimate with his wife. He appealed to the King, who at first pardoned him, but was afterwards persuaded by his Ministers to recall this pardon unless Rodolph became a Mahomedan. The King, who was very desirous to effect this object, ordered Rodolph in the most earnest manner to change his religion, and promised him a fortune of ten thousand tomans, and a beautiful wife. Rodolph refused to give up his faith, and the King was reluctantly obliged to let the law take its course. He was given over to the relations of the man he had slain. On the 31st October 1637, he was beheaded. By the King’s order his body was given over to the Armenians, who buried it as the corpse of a martyr. The priests reported that angels were seen, the night of its interment, hovering round the tomb.¹

Immediately to the south of Julfa and beyond the cemetery are the red rocky ramparts of the Kuh-i-Suffa. In a recess, on its northern front, less than half-way up, overlooking the city are the ruins of a summer-house upon the site of a hermitage, built by Shah Suleiman, and called the Takht-i-Suleiman. An excellent view is obtained from there. Close to the Kuh-i-Suffa is a rocky height known as the Takht-i-Rustam, from a tradition that Rustam built a fortress on this site. The ruins on the top are of a modern date. On the southern side of the rock, about half-way up, is a cavern with a natural spring. From the top of the Takht can be clearly seen the sharp demarcation between the arid desert on one side, and the green oasis of cultivated and irrigated gardens which surround the city, so famous for their fruit and melons. On one side are ragged walls of mud, ruins of modern houses standing among heaps of rubbish, ruins of the ancient city of Ferahabad, and on the other amidst a greenery which redeems the scene, rise the blue-tiled dome of the Masjid-i-Shah, the dome of the Madrasah Shah Hussain, and a few minarets. From here also can be obtained a magnificent view of the Zindeh Rud, like a silver riband, winding and turning between gardens on either side known as the Bagh-i-Shah, while lower down, Isfahan with its five bridges comes into view.

At the foot of the Kuh-i-Suffa was situated the famous palace of Ferahabad (Abode of Joy), built by Shah Sultan Hussain. The monarch was so attached to this place, that when the Afghans invaded Iran, he was quite willing to sacrifice Isfahan, if only they would leave him in peace here. At the zenith of its splendour, Ferahabad had wonderful palaces, lakes and gardens, which were the admiration of all. Ferahabad was evacuated by the Shah, and occupied by the Afghans, and a few years later, when they were finally expelled from Isfahan, they burned it to the ground. Nothing also remains of the castle of Tabarrak, the treasure-house of the Sefavi Kings.

Six miles to the west of Isfahan, through narrow lanes, along ditches of dirty water, or between high mud walls, on an extremely bad but passable

¹ Tavernier, Vol. II, page 239.



MINAREH JUMBAN,

motor road lies one of the most curious sights of Iran—the Minareh Jumban or the Quivering Minarets of Gouladoun. Here there is the tomb of a Sheikh Abdulla, about eight hundred years old. His sarcophagus, a big rectangular box, stands in an open vaulted recess, and upon either side of the facade above the arch rise the two minarets to a height of about thirty-five feet, the entire structure being made of brick tiled in geometrical transverse patterns of dark and light blue. A small spiral staircase in the interior of either minaret leads to the summit which is pierced with open arches, wherein there are four small windows. By seizing the wall at one of the apertures, and shaking it violently, an oscillation is started, the minaret diverging from the perpendicular by as much as two inches on either side. The other tower also begins to oscillate, and so does the domed platform between the minarets. There is a large crack by the side of one of the minarets which is said to have existed from time immemorial.

The Iranians say that a visit to the sacred shrine has miraculous powers of curing all diseases or protecting one against them, hence the pilgrimage of a great number of natives afflicted with all sorts of complaints.

About two miles from the Shaking Minarets is an isolated rocky hill with buildings of mud brick on the top, the bricks being of a very large size. Its ascent is by a path to the south-east where there are a series of steps formed by ledges of rock. This is the Atash Gadah built by Ardeshir Dirazdast or Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-425 B.C.). The Atash Gadah is on the very summit of the hill, and is about fourteen feet high, octagonal in form, and made of large unbaked bricks. The roof has now fallen down. It has eight doorways. Over each doorway is a sunken niche, the lines of which curve symmetrically to a point, so as to give an arched finish to each entrance on the inside. The floor is about fourteen feet in diameter, and nearly circular in shape, and in the centre is a curved outline of what might have been a base on which the fire altar rested.

Round about the shrine are many ruined buildings, which occupy the eastern, south-eastern and north-eastern sides of the level. They are situated on a lower level than the shrine. Some of these ruins are the remains of halls and rooms, and they are all made of clay and bricks, covered with stucco and plaster with niches in the walls. There are several arched recesses on the side of the crest.

The question now arises whether this is the actual fire-temple built by the Achæmenian King, Artaxerxes Longimanus or not. Lord Curzon says the ruins are not old. Sir William Ouseley (1823) also says that the remains of the edifice are not very ancient, but "occupying, as tradition states, the site of a ruined fire-temple." The Arab geographers call this place the fire-temple of Marabin or Maras, the name of a district in the vicinity of Isfahan. Ibn Khordadbeh (A.D. 816) while describing Isfahan and its neighbourhood mentions "the village of Marabin in which there is a citadel built by Tahmmath, and in it, a temple of Fire." Masudi says: "The second of these temples is situated on the summit of a mountain called Maras (or Marabin), near Isfahan. There were idols in this until they were removed by King Yustasp (Gushtasp, the patron of Zoroaster), when he adopted the religion of the Magi, and converted the shrine into a temple of fire. It is three farsakhs from Isfahan, and is still held in great veneration by the Magi." Ibn Rostah (about A.D. 950) says "Marabin borders upon the town of Jei. It was one of the pleasure grounds of the early Khoshrus. Kei Kaus is said to have resided there and to have beautified the place. At his command a lofty and magnificent citadel was erected on the mountain peak

there. It towered aloft so as to overlook the valley of the Zindeh Rud ; and from its summit there was a commanding view of the entire country. But King Behman, son of Isfendiar, took possession of it and burned it : and he built below it a stronghold, and established in it a shrine of fire, which stands till this day, and even the fire remains in it."

Hamza of Isfahan (eleventh century A.D.) says " He (Ardeshir Darazdast) founded in one day three fire-temples in the Province of Isfahan. The first was in the east, the second in the west, the third in the middle. The first of these is situated near the citadel of Marin (or Maras) and is the fire-temple of Shahr Ardeshir, the word Shahr signifying district, and Ardeshir being a name of Bahman ; the second is the Fire of Zervan Ardeshir located in the territory of Darak called Barkah ; and the third is the Fire of Mihr Ardeshir, located in the territory of Ardistan of the same name."

In an Iranian history of Isfahan composed about A.D. 1030, the construction of the temple is supposed to have taken place in the reign of Piruz, son of Yezdezird (A.D. 459-484). It was erected by Adhar Shapur, the head man of the village of Muristan in the district of Marabin.

Taking all these facts into consideration, and looking at the bricks which are very much like those found at Rhey, the temple must be decidedly ancient, but as there are no inscriptions therein, it is difficult to say whether it should be assigned to Achæmenian times or Sassanian times.

To the east of Isfahan, on the road to Yezd, are the extensive ruins of the village of Shahristan, which was once the residence of the nobles of Isfahan. All that can be seen besides the ruined houses, are the remains of a mausoleum, a solid brick building crowned by a cupola, and with a minaret attached to it. The stairs inside the minaret are so decayed that it is impossible to get to the summit. The bridge of Shahristan spans the Zindeh Rud, but that too is not in good repair.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

FROM ISFAHAN TO SHIRAZ

LEAVING Isfahan by the bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, the road proceeds southwards through a desolate track known as the Hazaar Darreh (Thousand Valleys) mostly composed of a slaty soil. This, according to the Iranians, was the scene of Rustam's battles with the dragon, and they add that it is owing to the poisonous exhalations of the monster that the earth is here so barren. On an elevation was a small round tower covered with a cupola, around which was a Cufic inscription. It was known as the Mil-i-Shatir or the Pillar of the Running Footman, and it is said that those who wanted to enter the service of the King in that capacity had to undergo a trial of their activity and strength, by going from the gate of the Royal Palace, and taking twelve arrows one after the other from this tower, between the rising and setting of the sun. It was about a league and a half from the palace to the tower and the distance to be traversed was one hundred and twenty miles in about fourteen hours. The popular story relating to the tower is that in former days, a King of Iran promised his daughter in marriage to anyone who would run before his horse all the way from Shiraz to Isfahan. One of his Shatirs nearly accomplished the task, having reached the eminence marked by the tower, when the King, fearful that he would have to keep his promise, dropped his whip. The ligatures which encompassed the Shatir's body were such that in the state he then was, he knew for certain that if he stooped to the ground to pick up the whip, his death would immediately follow, therefore, he contrived to take up the whip with his foot, transferred it to his hand, and presented it to the King. This trick having failed, the King dropped his ring, upon which the Shatir, who saw that his fate was decided, exclaimed "Oh King, you have broken your word, but I will show you my submission to the last." Saying this, he stooped, picked up the ring, and died. In commemoration of this event, the Shatir was buried on the spot, and this tower, called the Shatir's Tomb, was built over his remains.¹

From the site of the Shatir's Tomb, the road descends to the post station of Marg, where there is a caravanserai, and then crossing over a steep acclivity, comes to a level plain, till the village of Mahiar. Mahiar was once a flourishing place, but its walls and towers are now in ruins. The only relic of former times, and that too in a sad state of dilapidation, is the caravanserai built by the mother of Shah Abbas, and restored by Shah Suleiman. It is built of brick on a massive stone foundation.

From Mahiar the road goes through a barren and uninteresting valley to Kumisheh. Here is the tomb with a blue-tiled dome, of Shah Reza, grandson of the Imam Reza. The tomb of the saint is behind a brass trellis underneath the dome. The cells for pilgrims are in the inner court, where also are two tanks in one of which are kept a number of tame fish, supposed to be sacred. Originally the fishes were held sacred by "their noses and fins being hung with gold rings," but that distinction is done away with now, although the fishes still remain. The outside of the tomb is surrounded by old chenars. Round Kumisheh are also a number of pigeon towers. The Afghans, marching northwards towards Isfahan in 1722, completely desolated the place.

Beyond Kumisheh is a level plain fringed with mountains on the left side, where a big battle took place in 1835, between the armies of Mohammed Shah, commanded by Sir H. Lindsay Bethune, and the combined forces

¹ Morier, "Journey Through Persia."

of two of his uncles, the Firman Firma Hussein Ali Mirza, the Governor-General of Fars, and his brother Hasan Ali Mirza, both of whom upon the death of Feth Ali Shah, combined to dispute the succession of Mohammed Shah, their nephew, to the throne. The royal army consisted of four thousand men, while the opposing armies were much more in number. The two armies were encamped not far from each other, but neither army was aware of the presence of the other, a mist being between the two. A shot was accidentally fired in the rebel camp, and was heard by the Armenian wife of Colonel Shee in the Shah's Army. Sir H. Lindsay Bethune took the rebel army by surprise, and put them to flight. He marched down at once to Shiraz, captured the two uncles, and sent them as prisoners to Teheran, crushing the rebellion straightaway.

Continuing onwards several villages are passed in the hollow of the plain on the right, and then the walled village of Maksud Beggi before getting to Aminabad. It was originally erected by Daud Khan, the brother of Imam Kuli Khan, the Governor-General of Fars under Shah Abbas, and was meant to be a fortified redoubt against the Bakhtiari freebooters. In 1815, the whole place was rebuilt for the protection of wayfarers, the enclosure including a mud fort, a caravanserai, a mosque and baths. On the plains here grow the plant from which gum-ammoniac is derived.

A little beyond Aminabad is the administrative frontier between Iraq, Ajemi and Fars. In the latter province were the capitals of the Achæmenian Kings Pasargadæ, Istakhr, Persepolis: here also the Sassanian monarchs, in close proximity to the remains of the works of their predecessors, left their own bas-reliefs; and here, a succession of adventurers by sheer self-help, carved independent kingdoms. The first of these was Yakub bin Leith of Seistan, founder of the Sufari or Coppersmith dynasty, in the latter part of the ninth century. The Caliphs, however, recovered their lost power in the reign of his brother, but the power was again transferred to the Dilemi, whose founder was a fisherman. Then came the Seljuk invasion, and a Turkish General was appointed Governor of Fars, and he and his successors ruled from A.D. 1066 to 1149. Sunkur Ibn Modud, a Chieftain of the Turkoman tribe of Salghuris, who had been moved by the Seljuks from Khorassan to Fars, threw off the Seljuk yoke, and established his own independence in A.D. 1149. At this time Fars was an extensive kingdom, and comprised Kerman, Isfahan, the islands of the Gulf and even the Arab shore. In the reign of one of the descendants of Sunkur, Abu Bekr, Jenghiz Khan invaded Fars, and Abu Bekr having proffered his allegiance, was confirmed in his office. Later on, a Salghur Princess was married to the son of Hulagu Khan. Fars then became a Mongol province, until a man called Mubariz-ed-Din Mohammed founded a new dynasty. In the reign of the fifth prince of this El-Muzaffer (The Victorious) dynasty Timur first came to Shiraz in 1387, and had a friendly intercourse with Hafiz. Later on, Shah Mansur taking advantage of Timur's absence, rebelled against him. The Iranian Army was routed, Mansur was slain, and all the male members of his family put to death. After the break-up of this dynasty, Fars became the property of the Turkoman Black Sheep and White Sheep dynasties, and from them it passed under Iranian rule, in the time of Shah Ismail, the founder of the Sefavi dynasty, and from that date it has remained in the hands of Iran.¹

From Maksud Beggi, at a distance of twenty-five miles is the village of Yezdikhast. The village is built on the top of a rock, the rock standing in the middle of a deep valley; the latter is a trench cut down to a depth of over a hundred feet in the middle of the plain. At the top of the fissure, the plain resumes its normal level. There is a tradition that the trench

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

was once filled with water and was navigated by boats. This old ditch was once the boundary of Fars and Iraq.

Right from the middle of this ditch rises a long, narrow piece of rock from three to four hundred yards in length, completely severed from the ravine walls on either side, and standing absolutely isolated. Upon the summit of this rock were built tiers of cottages standing to a height of from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet from the gully bottom.

Entrance to the village is from one spot only, on the south-west side, by a draw-bridge of wooden rafters thrown across the ravine, and leading to a solitary low doorway pierced in the rock. When this draw-bridge is lifted up, access to the town is impossible. The main street is completely built over, and looks more like a tunnel or subterranean alley. Vaulted passages diverge from this, and flights of steps lead up to the higher cottages, which have projecting balconies with wooden railings on the exterior. Inside the town is a dilapidated mosque, said to be the Imamzadeh of Sayed Ali, son of the Imam Musa, whose progeny numbered over a thousand.

At the eastern end, the rock narrows down. It was here in 1779 that Zeki Khan, the savage half-brother of Kerim Khan Zend, who had assumed the sovereignty upon the latter's death, while marching northwards against his nephew Ali Murad Khan, ordered the leading inhabitants of Yezdikhist to be hurled down from the top, because they refused to yield to his demands. Eighteen people were thrown down one after another, and perished. For his nineteenth victim, he selected a Sayed, and ordered his wife and daughter to be delivered over to the soldiery. This proved too much even for his own attendants. That night, they cut the ropes of his tent which collapsed upon him. The villagers rushed in, and stabbed him to death.¹

At the base of the cliffs are a number of caves hewn in the rocks used as sheep-folds and stables. In the bottom of the ravine, and below the town, and on the near side of the stream is the old chaparkhaneh.² The caravanserai is on the far side, and was originally a building of the Sefavi period, but was restored by the Governor of Fars in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Close to Yezdikhist, but not on a motor road, is a place called Ujan where Bahram V, otherwise known as Bahram Gur (A.D. 420-438), the sporting Sassanian monarch, lost his life in a quicksand while pursuing the wild ass.

From Yezdikhist the road goes over a desolate gravelly plain bounded by high hills on the right, to Shulgistan. Here there is a ruined caravanserai of Shah Abbas, and an Imamzadeh with a green-tiled cupola, covering the remains of Mohammed, a son of the Imam Zeinulabedin. From here the road continues on to Abadeh (altitude 6,100 feet), a large walled village of 6,000 people, surrounded by numerous gardens, well watered and planted with trees.

Abadeh was once famous for its beautifully carved kashuks or sherbet spoons, and boxes which were made from the gulabi or pear wood, and shimshad or boxwood in the neighbouring villages. Spoons were hollowed out from a single piece of wood till they were almost as thin as paper, and quite transparent, while the handles were made of fragile and delicate filigree work. Sherbet spoons are still made here, but the bowls are not thinned

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

² Post-house.

out so much, and the filigree work is abandoned, the reason being that it was apt to get broken very soon. The carvings for the box covers and sides are made on thin slips, which are then glued on to the box. Carvings on boxes and photo frames are really very good.

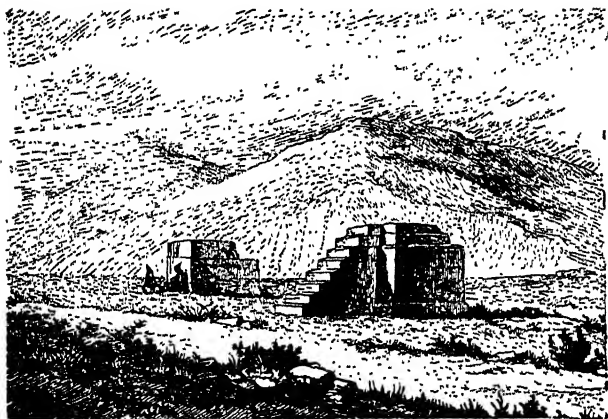
From Abadeh the road goes in a south-easterly direction to Surmek. It then proceeds along the flat, and later begins to ascend to Khan-i-Khoreh, where there is a caravanserai in a bleak desert. A further climb through a desolate and unattractive desert leads to the village of Dehbid (i.e., Village of the Willows), but the tragedy is that there is no village, and there are no willows. All that the place contains is a post-house and caravanserai, one or two huts, and a net-work of small watercourses in the middle of a bleak upland plain. It is 7,500 feet above the sea, and is considered one of the coldest places in Iran. The only thing of interest in Dehbid is an artificial mound of earth called by the natives Gumbaz-i-Bahur, and explained by them as the site of one of the eight shooting boxes of Bahram Gur. The hills and plains round Dehbid are the haunts of the Kashkai Lurs and other nomad tribes of Fars, who pass to and fro, at regular times of the year, driving their flocks to the highlands in the spring, and thieving when they get an opportunity.

For the visitor who wants to see Pasargadæ, it is advisable to spend the night at Dehbid, and leave very early next morning. After visiting Pasargadæ, he can spend the second night at Sivand, visiting Hajiabad and Persepolis the next day. If the weather is not cold, and he does not mind sleeping out, it is preferable not to stop at Sivand, but to proceed to the old chaparkhaneh (now an Amniyeh post), at Puzeh, and spend the night there, so as to have a long day for the ruins in the neighbourhood.

On leaving Dehbid, the road continues to wind over the hills until it crosses a stream by a very high backed bridge of five arches built by a Governor of Fars. Close to this is a large ruined caravanserai built by Kerim Khan Zend. The stream is the upper part of the Pulvar River, which goes through the plains of Meshed-i-Murghab, Hajiabad and Mervdasht, and flows into the Kur at the Pul-i-Khan. Following the valley, a big range of hills is crossed, and then a succession of desolate valleys and ridges follow, till at the bottom of a descent, the village of Murghab is seen, clustered against the hill-side in an open valley. There is a lot of wild-fowl in the stream at Murghab. Proceeding onwards, we come to a small valley containing the tiny hamlet of Kurshan. The road to Pasargadæ diverges from the main road, and crossing several watercourses by bridges, and fording the Pulvar River, we enter the ruins of Cyrus's capital. A car can go right up to the tomb.



WINGED FIGURE—BAS-RELIEF, PASARGADÆ
Dieulafoy, "L'art Antique, etc."



ANCIENT FIRE-ALTARS, PASARGADÆ

CHAPTER XXXIX

PASARGADÆ AND THE TOMB OF CYRUS

TRADITION says that Cyrus built the city of Pasargadæ over the spot where he vanquished Astyages, overthrowing the Median Kingdom, about the year 550 B.C. Here too he built his tomb. The ruins of Pasargadæ can be divided into seven groups in all.

Descending from the northern ridge are the remains of a great platform of stone built on a terrace on the left-hand side of the road at about three hundred yards distance. The terrace consists of solid blocks of masonry, and is in the shape of a parallelogram, two of the sides having recessed centres and projecting wings, the total length being about two hundred and ninety feet, and breadth fifty feet. The length of the main front, facing towards the north-west, is almost the same. Its height is thirty-eight and a half feet, and is made up of fourteen layers of stone. The stones are of a whitish colour, the outer surface being chiselled in low relief from the edge. They are so beautifully matched that no mortar was used between them. On the outer surface some of the blocks show the mason's building marks upon them, and in others they have been torn away to furnish material for buildings. Where the outer facing has been peeled off, one can see the interior masonry made of the blue limestone of the mountain. The cramp irons that secured the blocks have been gouged out. This building was probably intended as an Audience Hall of Cyrus, but was never completed.

Descending from the ridge towards the south at the level of the plain is the second ruin. It is the remains of a single wall that must have formed part of a square building. The natives call this the Zindan-i-Suleiman (Solomon's Prison). It is very like the tower that stands in front of the rock tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam. The wall is forty-two feet three inches high, and twenty-three feet three inches square, and the blocks of stone are of the same make as those at the Takht-i-Suleiman, and held together by cramps. They have also got the same incised orifices visible at the Naksh-i-Rustam. The doorway is still there and is on a level with the indicated floor, and the remains of a staircase can be seen. There are no niches to be seen, nor any evidence of grooves, except the small grooves at an angle of 45° to the doorway.

The question arises as to what can the building be. It has been called a tomb, on account of its strong resemblance to some of the early Lycian tombs. M. Dieulafoy has gone so far as to suggest that it is the tomb of Cambyzes, the father of Cyrus. Others say that it is the remains of an old Achæmenian fire-temple, and probably the latter are right. It may be a sagri.

About another three hundred yards in a southerly direction is a single monolith, about eighteen feet high, and broken at the top. One side of it is hollowed in the form of a niche. High up on the exterior surface are carved in four lines, a trilingual inscription in the Iranian, Susian and Babylonian cuneiform script, the words "Adam Kurush Khshayathiya Hakhamanishya," i.e., "I am Cyrus, the King, the Achæmenian." The top of the shaft is made in such a way as to receive the beams of the roof that covered the hall of whose walls it formed a portion.

About another few hundred yards in a southerly direction is a single circular limestone column, thirty-six feet high, and three feet four inches



TOMB OF CYRUS, PASARGADÆ.

By kind permission of the Iran L

in diameter at the base. It stands on a small plinth of black basalt, without a capital, and is in the centre of an oblong court, the outer walls of which are marked by three hollowed angle-piers, each bearing on its surface the same trilingual inscription as before. This is one of the few unfluted columns that now remain in Iran. The enclosure further contains remains of the pedestals of eight columns, and the stumps or bases of former doorways on which are visible a row of feet. This is probably the palace of Cyrus.

About one hundred and fifty yards to the south-east is another platform which likewise supported a building or palace, the bases of whose columns, in two rows of six each, are still visible; at a distance of a few yards from one of these stands a square limestone slab, eleven feet seven inches high, four feet broad, and two feet in thickness. Carved in low relief on the slab is the winged figure of a King,¹ taken by various people as the fravashi or genius of Cyrus, and by others for Cyrus himself. The figure is now weather-beaten, defaced and very indistinct. It is facing towards the right and the face is slightly turned towards the spectator. On his head is a crown, which is formed of two uræi, over which is the hemhem or crown of Harpocrates. It shows very definitely the influence of Egyptian art. The hair and beard are curled. A double set of immense vanlike wings spring from the shoulders, one pair uplifted, and the other drooping almost to the feet. The figure carries in his right hand an object. The top of the monolith is broken, but we know that on it was written the words, "I am Cyrus, the King, the Achæmenian."

Considerably to the west is the tomb of Cyrus. What it must have been in olden days can be judged from Arrian who says that the mausoleum was standing in the midst of a park surrounded by a grove, and rich meadows of grass. The tomb stood on a rectangular base of stone, and the sepulchre is described as "a stone house, roofed over, and having a door so small as to be difficult to enter even for a man of no large stature." In this place, the body of Cyrus was laid in a "golden coffin," that rested upon a couch, "the feet of which were of hammered gold." Over it was a covering of Babylonian tapestry, under it were spread carpets of royal purple, and around it were jewels and precious stones and rich vestments of purple and other colours. When Alexander visited it, he found that the tomb had been rifled, the King's body had been thrown outside the coffin, which was broken, and only the casket and catafalque remained. He gave orders that everything should be restored to its old condition, closed up the doorway, and put his own seal on it.

The tomb consists of a building of huge blocks of white limestone, standing on a terraced base of which seven steps are at present visible, diminishing in size as they approach the summit. The lowest stage is a plinth over two feet high, forty-seven feet two inches long, and forty-three feet nine inches broad. The height from the ground to the roof is thirty-six feet, the mausoleum itself being eighteen feet high, twenty-seven feet wide and twenty-one feet long. The mausoleum and pedestal are composed of white limestone, and are smoothly cut and perfectly laid, held together with iron cramps, which have now been taken away. Several bushes of the evergreen type have taken root in the crannies between the great stones of the terraced steps, on the south-west side, while another has sprouted out from the roof itself.

The mausoleum is built of three courses of limestone blocks, the lowest corresponding in depth with the height of the doorway. On a thin projecting cornice is the gabled roof, consisting of two tiers of immense stones, two blocks composing the lower course, and one upon them for the summit.

¹ See illustration on page 227.

The doorway of the tomb is four feet three inches high, and two feet three inches in width. The entrance originally consisted of two doors opening upon each other, so that both could not be thrown back at the same time.

The chamber that contained the golden coffin is now empty, the ceiling and walls blackened with smoke. The floor consists of two polished slabs, the larger one being mutilated by great holes. There are similar mutilations in the walls, probably an attempt made by robbers to see what lay underneath. Perhaps the sarcophagus stood here. The side walls and ceilings are also composed of large stones. At the far end is a string suspended from side to side bearing a number of brass bell-shaped trinkets or votive offerings, the donations of pilgrims as mementoes of their journey. On the right hand wall (the southern side) is carved an Iranian inscription and verses from the Koran, within an ornamental border in the form of a mehrab or prayer niche. On the left-hand side were several lamps, and close by a Koran. On the walls in Pehlavi characters was the name of a Zoroastrian priest, Mobed Ormuzdyar Behram. The dimensions of the cell are—length ten feet five inches, breadth seven feet six inches, height six feet ten inches.

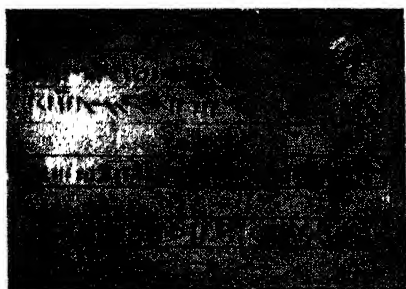
There was an inscription in olden times inside the tomb. Aristobulus, who was appointed by Alexander to restore the tomb after its desecration, mentions an Iranian inscription to this effect :—" O Man, I am Cyrus, the son of Camhyses, who founded the Iranian Empire, and was King of Asia. Grudge me not, therefore, this monument."

Strabo, after quoting this epitaph, says that Onesicritus mentions that " the inscription was in Greek, engraved in Iranian characters, and there was another in Iranian of the same import :—" I, Cyrus, King of Kings, lie here."

Alexander, finding the tomb of Cyrus broken open and desecrated by Polymachus, a Pellean, ordered the man to be put to death. He then ordered an inscription to be engraved below the former in Greek characters, and it ran thus :—

" O Man, Whosoever Thou Art, and Whencesoever Thou Comest (For I Know Thou Wilt Come), I Am Cyrus Who Founded The Empire of The Iranians. Grudge me not Therefore this Little Earth that covers my Body."

The original inscription in cuneiform characters ran thus :—



ORIGINAL INSCRIPTION INSIDE TOMB
OF CYRUS.

Round about the tomb are a number of broken pillars, some embedded in a wall, or standing alone in what might have been once a rectangular enclosure around the tomb. The back of the monument is towards the present roadway, and the doorway is in the northern face. Nor did it stand in the centre of the enclosure, the entrances to which can still be traced. It was placed in a different axis from them, the idea being to prevent both the doorway and the interior of the sepulchre from being visible outside. A few Mahomedan graves have been crowded within the area next to the tomb, for in modern times the tomb of Cyrus is known as Meshed-i-Madar-i-Suleiman (The Grave of Solomon's Mother).

Pliny the Elder (A.D. 79) says:—"The Magi held the fortress of Pasargadæ, in which is the tomb of Cyrus." Arrian and Strabo mention that the Magians were the hereditary guardians of the tomb, dwelling near it, and offering a sheep every day, and a horse each month as a sacrifice. Arrian also talks of "a small house for the Magi who guarded the tomb of Cyrus." About a hundred yards north of the mausoleum, there can be seen just the foundation of a building, which may have been the one spoken of by Arrian.

To-day, this magnificent tomb has descended to a shrine for the shabby offerings of an ignorant people to a fabled deity. To the tomb is ascribed supernatural powers. To the tomb come Iranian maids and matrons who are unhappy in love, or who want continuance of happiness therein. These superstitious ladies offer to the "Mother of Solomon" various little trinkets that they may gain their ends, and it is these that are seen hanging on the cord inside the tomb. The Magi are not there now to look after the shrine, which is kept by ignorant, foolish women, who do their best to stop travellers climbing up the steps to see a "woman's grave."

A mile to the west of this tomb, behind a little hill, are two curious structures close to a small and artificial looking mound between it, and the hill. A stream flows close under the hill, and on the other side of this are two colossal fire altars,¹ one of which is led up to by a detached flight of steps. Both are hollow—each is one stone, the interior of which has been removed, but left without entrance, the side whence the excavation had been made being turned downwards. At present, the sides are chipped and the interior can be seen. They stand in what must have been a large enclosure, the plain near by being strewn with remains of ancient buildings. The place is called Takht-i-Gor.

¹ See illustration on page 227.

CHAPTER XL

FROM ISFAHAN TO SHIRAZ—*Continued*

LEAVING Pasargadæ behind, and continuing on to Shiraz, the road enters a range of mountains. The ravine expands into open valleys and narrow defiles. The caravanserai of Kavamabad is passed in the distance. The place is named after its founder, Haji Kawwam, a Minister at Shiraz in the time of the Kajars. The pretty village of Siwand, elevation 5,600 feet, comes next, situated on the slopes of the high rocky hills enclosing the valley which is about one mile broad on both sides, and through which a stream flows, formed of the waters diverted from the Pulvar River. The valley is well cultivated and has good trees, especially vines. The village is inhabited by Lurs, and is built in ascending tiers on the mountain-side. It has a population of about 2,000 people.

From Siwand the road goes in a south-easterly direction to the Lur village of Saidan. An abrupt turn to the right brings the traveller into a valley bordered on either side by mountains. The tiny village of Hajiabad is passed on the right, and later on, the Amniyeh post at Puzeh, situated at the western extremity of the Pulvar River, which flows in a deep gully just below, and not far from the ancient Istakhr.

From Puzeh the road hugs the mountains, the inscriptions of Naksh-i-Rajab are passed on the left-hand side, and then Persepolis. Here there is an abrupt bend to the right through the plain of Mervdasht, a flat expanse fifteen miles in width from north to south, while its south-easterly direction is said to stretch for forty miles. Going past the village of Kinareh, the Pul-i-Khan is next crossed, a lofty bridge over the river Kur, a little below its confluence with the Pulvar. Crossing the bridge, the road continues towards the mountains that fringe the plain of Mervdasht. The village of Zarghun, built at the base of a rocky chain and famous for its muleteers, is passed on the left-hand side. A succession of mountain ridges with valleys and undulations is next encountered, and then in a plain is Bajgah or Place of Tolls, so called from the fact that formerly there was a station here of toll-gatherers upon caravans. Here there is a large caravanserai with a tank of water in front. From Bajgah an ascent is made of the Kuh-i-Bamu and after descending the ultimate ridge in the opening of a mountain pass, a cluster of cypresses and the town of Shiraz come suddenly into view. The gateway at the end of this pass is known as the Tang-i-Allahu Akbar (or The Pass of God is Great), from the expression that is supposed to leap to the traveller's lips, as he looks at the spectacle below. In the Sefavi days, an aqueduct brought water into Shiraz down this pass, but it is now in complete ruins. On the right-hand side of the road is a bas-relief of Feth Ali Shah smoking a kalia, with two of his sons, carved on the rock; close to it is another of Rustam transfixing a lion which holds a man in its claws.¹ The end of this pass was originally fortified, and an arched gateway stretched from mountain to mountain. It fell into ruin, but was rebuilt by Zeki Khan in 1820. In the upper storey of the gateway, above the arch, is a chamber, containing upon a desk surrounded by a wooden rail, a big and ponderous Koran. It is supposed to weigh eight stone, and it is believed that if one leaf were withdrawn, it would equal in weight the entire volume! It is said to have been written by the Imam Zeinulabedin, the son of Hussein,

¹ Curzon, "Persia."



ENTRANCE TO THE TANG-I-ALLAHU AKBAR

or by Sultan Ibrahim, the son of Shah Rukh and grandson of Timur.¹ Going through the gateway, along a bare and desolate road, crossing a bridge over the stream that flows outside the city walls, we enter Shiraz, and after passing through a maze of alleys get to the Hotel Fars, the only decent and comfortable hotel in Shiraz. In the Sefavi days, the road from the pass to the bridge was planted with cypresses, adorned with marble basins of water in the middle, and lined with rows of walled gardens entered by arched pavilions. Nothing of that now remains. The valley in which Shiraz lies is thirty miles long by ten miles wide, and is completely surrounded by mountains which in winter-time are covered with snow.

¹ Curzon, "Persia."

CHAPTER XLI

PERSEPOLIS AND OTHER RUINS

THE best way to see Persepolis for the traveller who comes from the north is to stop the night at the Amniyeh post at Puzeh if possible ; but the traveller coming from Shiraz would do better to spend the night at Kinareh, about a mile away from Persepolis.

The monuments of antiquity here can be divided into those of the Achæmenian period, and those of the Sassanian times. The Achæmenian remains can be sub-divided into four groups :—

- (1) The ruins of the city of Istakhr ; (2) ruins on the plain of Merv-dasht ; (3) the tombs, fire-altars, etc., at Naksh-i-Rustam.
- (4) The ruins of Persepolis.

The Sassanian ruins can equally be divided into four groups :—

- (1) The Hajiabad inscription in the Tang-i-Shah Sarwan.
- (2) The Sassanian bas-reliefs below the tombs at the Naksh-i-Rustam.
- (3) The bas-reliefs at Naksh-i-Rajah.
- (4) Pehlavi inscriptions on the platform at Persepolis.

From Puzeh horses have to be procured to visit the Hajiabad inscriptions and Naksh-i-Rustam. The Pulvar has to be forded, and it is a difficult thing to do when it is in flood. The Amniyeh people, as a rule, are willing to lend their horses for a small *backsheesh*.

About half way down the valley of the Pulvar is the small village of Hajiabad, the cliff wall to the north of which, about one mile distant, is pierced by several natural caverns, of considerable depth and dimensions. One of these is known as the Tang-i-Shah Sarwan. It stands on the right at the mouth of a gorge north-west just about a mile from the town. The cave, a natural recess in the limestone, is used by shepherds as a shelter for themselves and their sheep. On entering the dark cave, on the right-hand wall is seen an irregular smoothed patch, with five square tablets, four of them equally large, some eight feet from the ground, and to the left the irregular patch. Only two of those patches are engraved, and contain the bilingual epigraph of Shapur I. The writing is Chaldeo-Pehlavi and Sassanian Pehlavi, and records a remarkable shot with an arrow by King Shapur I. According to Mr. Thomas ("Early Sassanian Inscriptions") they are supposed to be a version of Shapur I's conversion to Christianity. But history gives no such record. The beginning of the inscription reads :—"This is the representative of the Ormuzd-worshipping divine Shapur, King of Kings, Arian and non-Arian, heaven descended of the race of the gods, son of the Ormuzd-worshipping divine Ardeshir, King of Kings, heaven descended of the race of the gods, grandson of the divine Papak, the King."

Close to the Tang-i-Shah Sarwan, on the other side of the gorge, is another and a smaller cave, where is the grave of one Sheikh Ali, a holy man. It is a broken Mahomedan tomb with an Iranian inscription, and is remarkable for its picturesque position.

(2) Proceeding south-west from the Tang-i-Shah Sarwan along the foot of the cliff wall known as the Hussein Kuh, that bounds the valley of the Pulvar on the north, for about three to four miles, we come to the Achæmenian and the Sassanian remains at the Naksh-i-Rustam. From the



THE HAJIABAD INSCRIPTION OF SHAPUR I.

post at Puzeh they cannot be more than a mile and a half distant, but the valley between is cut up with gullies and watercourses. The entire extent of cliff occupied by the tomb and bas-reliefs is about one hundred and eighty yards in length.

The Sassanian bas-reliefs at the Nakhsh-i-Rustam are seven in number. Coming along from Hajiabad, after passing the first royal rock tomb, there is a large space on the cliff face, originally designed for a bas-relief, but now containing a Mahomedan inscription.

Facing west, the first Sassanian bas-relief is encountered. It is on the level of the ground. The length of the panel is nineteen feet, and its height eleven feet. On the relief are four figures, with a fifth one of diminutive stature. The central figure is a Sassanian monarch with a globular crown, and streamers flying in the air behind. He has a handsome face, with curly hair on either side, and his beard tied in a knot. His dress is typically Sassanian, a close-fitting garment, and loose shulwars. His left hand rests on the hilt of his sword; in his right hand he holds the circlet, the other half of which is grasped by the figure on the right, which is about the same size as himself, but is the figure of a woman. Between the images of the King and the woman is a small defaced figure, that of a boy. Behind the King are two warriors, or attendants. The first has a thick beard and braided hair, and wears a tall helmet. His right hand and forefinger are lifted up in an attitude of respect. There are no inscriptions to say who they are. M. Dieulafoy thinks that the royal personages are Varahran II (A.D. 275-293), his wife and child. But the crown the King is wearing looks very like that of Narses; and the woman may be a queen or a goddess. Some writers think that the relief might represent the investiture of Narses by Anahita. Others say that it represents the marriage of Varahran V, Bahram Gor (A.D. 420-438) with an Indian Princess.

The second and third¹ bas-reliefs represent equestrian combats. Here also there are no inscriptions, and it is suggested that they may commemorate victorious engagements of Varahran IV (A.D. 388-399). These are carved one below the other, below the second Achaemenian tomb, the tomb of Darius Hystaspes. The lower of the two panels shows two mounted figures charging each other at full gallop with lances in rest. The King is on the left-hand side, while his enemy on the right wears a helmet with a knob on the top. In the upper panel, the King triumphs over his enemy, whose horse is thrown upon its haunches, and the driver is driven back in the saddle, his lance broken and tilted in the air by the fury of the onslaught. The King here wears a peculiar helmet consisting of two wings on either side of the globe (the head-dress of Varahran IV), carries a quiver at his belt, and has a tuft on either side. There is a tuft on the head of his charger as well. Behind him stands his standard-bearer, carrying a standard consisting of a staff, and of a cross-bar below it from which pendants or maces depend. Older writers have stated that the pear-shaped pendant which swings at the royal horse's quarters is a tassel. Sykes² thinks it is a mace and not a tassel, and I agree. As a rule tassels are not fastened by chains, and they would be too heavy to serve such a purpose, and they do not appear in all the sculptures, as they otherwise would. It is obviously intended for a weapon which was held in the hand or thrown, or else swung round the head and used as a mace. Chardin described it as a bullet used as a sling. Sykes³ says, "It was in fact what is known as a 'morning star.' At Yezd, a game is played which consists in collecting a chain in the hand, and throw-

¹ See illustration on page 251.

² "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

³ *Ibid.*

ing it at a friend. It is then jerked back and again prepared for action. This was probably the use of the pendant described, and it must have served some such purpose, as it was uncomfortable for the charger, and there was apparently only one, not two to each horse." Both the King and his enemy, and the horses wear coats of mail. The upper tablet is twenty-four feet long by twelve feet high, and is badly defaced. The lower tablet is in a better state of preservation.

The fourth tablet is between the tomb of Darius Hystaspes and the third royal tomb on its left. It represents the triumph of East over West, the conquest of Iran over Rome, the capture of the aged Roman Emperor Valerian by Shapur I of Iran, at Edessa, in A.D. 260. This tablet is thirty-five and a half feet long, and sixteen feet high, and is four feet above the level of the soil. The central figure on horseback is Shapur I. He is receiving the homage of the captive Valerian, and the Pretender Cyriades, the obscure fugitive of Antioch, who was raised to the throne by Shapur. The Sassanian King wears the mural crown surmounted by the globe, and has thick hair in curls. His beard is tied in a knot below his chin; a necklace hangs round his throat; behind him, and also from his sword hilt and plaited horse's tail, are frilled ribands. He wears the usual shulwars. His left hand grasps his sword hilt, his right hand is outstretched, and appears to be giving Cyriades, who is standing up with uplifted hands, the cydaris or royal circlet. Cyriades, and Valerian are both wearing Roman dress. Valerian is kneeling down with his hands outstretched in supplication, and his face has an expression of piteous appeal. Both captives have fetters round their ankles, and Valerian has a chaplet on his head. At the crupper of the King's, is suspended by a chain, the usual pear-shaped pendant. Behind the King, in the background is the upper part of the figure of a man, perhaps an attendant, wearing a tall cap and braided hair. His forefinger is uplifted in reverence. It is a worthy record of Iran's triumph, and commemorates the Roman's shame and humiliation to posterity. There is a defaced inscription in the Pehlavi character in the lower part. The inscription is bilingual in Greek and Pehlavi. The Greek runs as follows:—

ΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΟΠΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΤΟΜΑΣ ΔΑΣΝΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ
 ΣΑΠΥΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ
 ΚΑΙ ΑΝ ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΕΚ ΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΘΕΩΝ ΥΙΟΥ
 ΜΑΣ ΔΑΣΝΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΤΑΞΕΡΞΕΣ ΑΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩ
 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΕΚ ΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΘΕΩΝ
 ΕΚ ΓΟΝΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΠΑΠΑΚΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ

The Iranian transcript is:—"Pathkar Zani Mazdisn bag Shahpuri, Malkan Malka Airan Wa Aniran Minuchitri Min Yazdan, bari Mazdisn bag Artahshetr, Malkan Malka Airan, Minuchitri Min Yazdan, Napi bag Papaki Malka."

The meaning is:—"This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipping divine Shapur, King of Kings, Arian and non-Arian, heaven descended of the race of the gods, son of the Ormuzd-worshipping divine Artaxerxes, King of Kings, Arian, heaven descended of the race of the gods, grandson of the divine Papak, the King."

The fifth tablet, like the second and third, is an equestrian combat. It is twenty feet long by eleven and a half feet high and is on the level of the



FIRST SASSANIAN INSCRIPTION
(NAKSH-I-RUSTAM).

ground. Here again, the victorious King is on the left-hand side and advancing at full gallop. He wears a three-pointed diadem surmounted by a knob. His features have been mutilated. On his shoulders, and on the head of his horse are tufts similar to those previously mentioned. A quiver hangs at his side. The King and his charger are in parts clad in coats of mail; beneath the belly of the horse hang a row of discs, and behind the quarters there are two pendants. His antagonist on the right-hand side also wears a helmet surmounted by a knob. He is completely worsted in the fray, his horse thrown back on his haunches, his own spear broken in two, hanging in the air, while his adversary's lance pierces him in the throat. Behind the King is his ensign on horseback. The standard consists of a staff terminating in a cross-bar, crowned by three projections, and with two pendants depending below. The figures here have not been identified.

To the west of this is a smooth surface, evidently prepared for a bas-relief it has never received. The sixth tablet is round a bend in the rock, and is chiselled on a projecting surface of rock. It measures seventeen feet by eight feet. The King is in the centre; on the left-hand side are five figures, and on the right-hand side three, all looking towards the King, their heads and shoulders only being visible. Those on the right hand wear high caps, are bearded and curled, and have the raised forefinger and right hand. Of those on the left, two wear the pointed head-dress, while one is bare-headed and has thick curls. The King is standing at full length, but his head is turned over the right shoulder. His hands rest on the pommel of his sword, and he wears the crown peculiar to the King. His hair is puffed and curled; his feet are hidden by a projecting surface of rock. The King is Varahran II, and the men are supposed to be his courtiers.

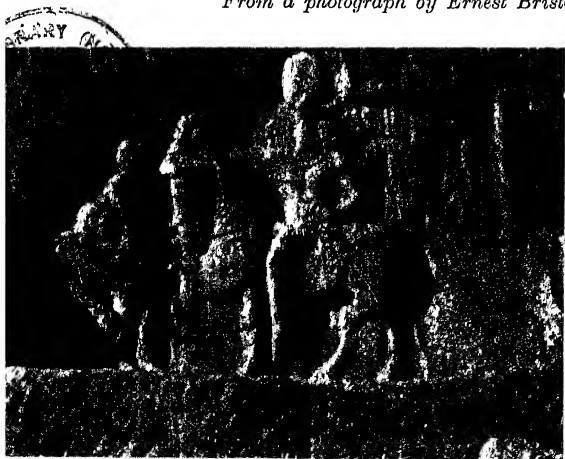
A little to the east, on a part of the rock, smoothed for the main picture, but separate from it, is a figure at full length, an old Elamite bas-relief.

The last bas-relief, the seventh, is that of Ormuzd and Ardeshir Babegan (A.D. 226-240), the founder of the Sassanian dynasty. Ormuzd is presenting the royal circlet to Ardeshir. The length of this panel is twenty-two feet. Ormuzd and Ardeshir are mounted on horseback facing each other. The horses' foreheads touch in the centre of the panel. Ormuzd is on the right-hand side, and wears the mural crown with curled hair above it, falling upon the shoulders. His beard is square and well trimmed, and his features are clean cut. In his left hand he holds a sceptre, the emblem of divinity; in his right he holds out the circlet with pendant ribbons. The King approaches from the left-hand side, and with outstretched right arm grasps the other side of the circlet. He wears a globe-crowned helmet, the globe inflated. This inflated globe is commonly supposed to typify fire. His left hand is lifted up and held to his mouth. His beard is rounded, and his uncurled hair hangs on his shoulders. Both the God and the King wear long flowing trousers. The usual pendants hang at each horse's hind-quarters. Around the chest of the King's horse is a band adorned with medallions, while the ornaments on the horse of Ormuzd are lions' heads in metal. Behind the King stands a solitary figure holding a fly flap. Trampled beneath the feet of the horses are two prostrate figures. The one under the King's charger, wearing a helmet with a mark on the right side and streamers, is supposed to be Artabanus V, the last king of the Parthian dynasty, while the one under Ormuzd's horse appears to have snakes wreathed round his head, and is supposed by some to be Ahriman, the Evil Spirit; while others think it is Zohak, while still others say it is Vologases, the predecessor of Artabanus.



THE TOMB OF DARIUS HYSTASPES

From a photograph by Ernest Bristow, Esq.



FOURTH SASSANIAN TABLET—SHAPUR & VALERIAN
(NAKSH-I-RUSTAM).

Trilateral bilingual inscriptions are cut upon the shoulders of both horses. On the chest of Ormuzd's horse is engraved

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ ΔΙΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ

"This is the image of the God Zeus."

The inscription on the King's horse is more illegible. It reads as follows:—

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ (ΜΑΣΔΑΣ ΝΟΥ)
 ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΤΑ [ΚΑ^ΡΣΥ-ΒΑΣΙΛ] ΕΩΣ [ΒΑ] ΣΙΔ ΕΩΝ
 ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ [ΕΚΓ] Ε [ΝΟΥ] ΣΘΕΩΝ (ΕΚΓΟΝΟΥ)
 ΘΕΟΥ ΠΑΠΑ [ΚΟΥΒ] Α [ΣΙΛ] ΕΩ [Ξ]

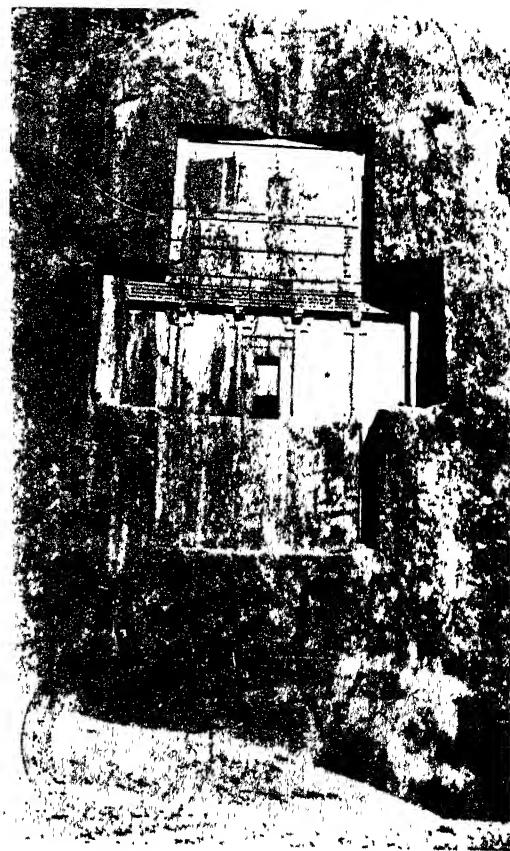
"This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipping God, Artakarsur (Ardeshir), King of Kings, Arian of the race of the Gods, Son of the God, Papak, the King."

This is the sum total of the Sassanian sculptures at the Naksh-i-Rustam. The Achæmenian remains are many, chief among them being the tombs of the kings. Three of these tombs face south on the plain, while the fourth is at right angles to the others and faces west. Three of these have never been identified, but the second one, close to the one facing west, has cuneiform inscriptions, and is known to be the tomb of Darius Hystaspes. Access to the interior of the tomb can only be had by means of ladders or scaffolding.

Outwardly, these four tombs are all alike, and present the appearance of a big cross, the cross rising to a hundred feet from the ground, while the base of each tomb is thirty feet from the ground. The cross has a total length of seventy-two feet, the upper and lower segments being thirty-five and a half feet in breadth, while the centre or transverse segment is a bare cutting, five to six feet deep at the base, vertical at the back and quite unadorned. Then comes the sepulchre, the upper compartment of which is of solid stone, the lower portion only being pierced to give access to the tomb. On either side of the entrance are two semi-detached bull-headed columns, which rise from a platform. The cornice is elegantly moulded and adorned. The door was originally closed by a stone block hung upon a pivot, but it has been broken into now, and the block has disappeared. Above the portico are sculptured figures. There are fourteen images with upraised arms, which bear a platform, and on this stand another fourteen more, bearing yet another platform upon which is the King, standing in his royal vestures. These figures are of different nationalities, and wear different kinds of clothing. The corner posts of the terrace terminate in bulkheads at the top, and on its summit are two objects. On the left-hand side, the King is standing on the topmost of the receding steps, clad in the royal vestures and tiara, about seven feet in stature. In his left hand he holds a bow which rests upon the ground, and his right is uplifted, invoking the God Ormuzd. The latter is on the top of the picture, his head and shoulders rising from a scroll of wings, and holding in his hand the royal circlet. His upper part is that of a man, and his lower part terminates in plumes, and he is represented as floating in the air. There is a disc round his waist, he has outspread horizontal wings, and long streamers. In one hand he holds a ring, while the other is raised in an attitude of benediction. He faces the King. Beneath the God, and in front of the King is a fire-altar, while in the right-hand corner



SECOND TOMB FACING SOUTH



TOMB FACING WEST

in the sky is the solar disc. On either side of the platform, and in the returning angles of the rock, are a triple vertical row of figures, which represent the bodyguard or attendants of the sovereign.

Going through the doorway, the visitor enters a sort of vestibule, hewn out of the solid rock, and either flat-roofed or arched. Behind this and opening from it are a series of recesses and stone sarcophagi originally covered with stone lids for the reception of the embalmed bodies. The maximum number of these sarcophagi are nine. The cavities have been rifled, and bats have made in them their habitation.

The first tomb, as mentioned before, faces west, and it is almost inaccessible. Its inaccessibility, however, has been the means of its preservation. The tomb next to it and the first one facing south is the tomb of Darius, son of Hystaspes. The central columns of the portico, and part of the upper surface of the rock behind the King are full of cuneiform inscriptions in the Iranian, Susian, and Babylonian tongues. A translation of the Iranian text is appended below :—

- (1) A great God is Ahura Mazda who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Darius King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) I am Darius, the great King, King of Kings, King of the countries possessing all kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide, an Iranian, the son of an Iranian, an Arian, of Arian lineage.
- (3) *Says Darius the King* :—"By the grace of Ahura Mazda, these are the provinces which I seized afar from Iran. I ruled them ; they brought tribute to me ; what was commanded to them by me, this they did ; the law which is mine that was established for them ; Media, Susiana, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasnia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Gandara, India, the Amyrgian Scythians, the pointed capped Scythians, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt (Armenia), Cappadocia, Sparda, Ionia, the Scythians beyond the sea, Skudra, the sea-faring Ionians, the Puntians, Kushians, Maxyes, Karkians."
- (4) *Says Darius the King* :—"Ahura Mazda when he saw this earth in commotion, afterwards gave it to me ; he made me King ; I am King ; by the grace of Ahura Mazda, I established it on its foundation : what I commanded to them, this they did as was my will. If thou shalt think : 'Something limited in number are these countries which Darius the King, held,' look at the picture of those who are bearing my throne, thus thou wilt know them ; then it will be known to thee that the spear of an Iranian man hath gone forth afar ; then it will be known to thee that an Iranian man fought his foe far from Iran.'"
- (5) *Says Darius the King* :—"This is what was done ; all this by the grace of Ahura Mazda, I did ; Ahura Mazda bore me aid while I was doing my deeds ; let Ahura Mazda protect me from evil, and my royal house, and this country ; this I pray of Ahura Mazda ; this let Ahura Mazda give me. Oh Man, what is the precept of Ahura Mazda, may it not seem to thee repugnant ; do not leave the true path ; do not sin."

The two figures behind the King are :—

- (1) Gobryas, a Patishorian, spear-bearer of Darius the King.
- (2) Aspathines, bow-bearer, a server of the arrows of Darius the King.

The inscription near the vassal nations is :—"These are the Maxyes."



AN ELAMITE PRIEST.



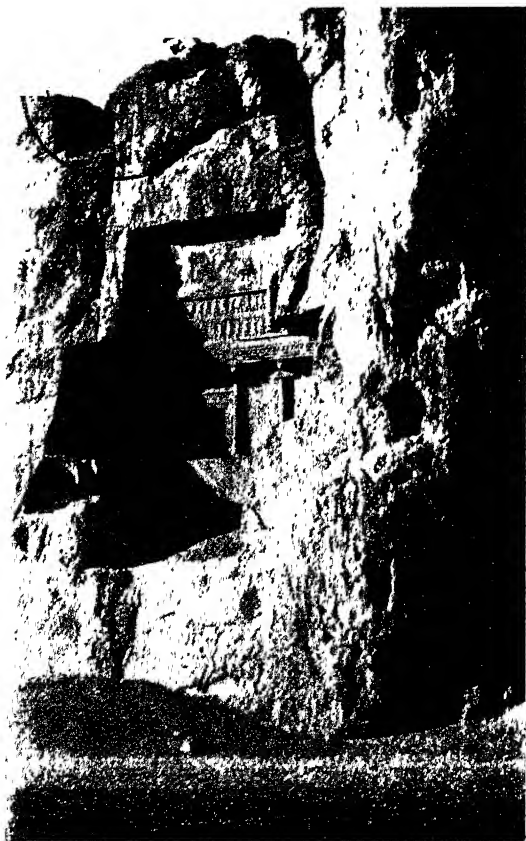
SEVENTH SASSANIAN TABLET—ORMUZD AND
ARDESHIR

There are two interesting stories in connection with this sepulchre as told by Ctesias. He says: "Darius ordered a tomb to be made for himself in the Double Mountain, and the work was brought to completion; but when he wished to inspect it, he was dissuaded from doing so by the Chaldeans (the Magian soothsayers), and by his parents. His parents, however, were anxious to go up to see it. As they were being drawn up, the priests who had hold of the ropes saw some serpents and became so frightened that they let go the ropes, and the parents of the king fell and were killed. The grief of Darius was so great that he caused to be beheaded forty of those who had pulled on the ropes." The second story told by Ctesias is that Bagapates, the favourite eunuch of Darius, lived in his master's tomb for seven years, until death overtook him.

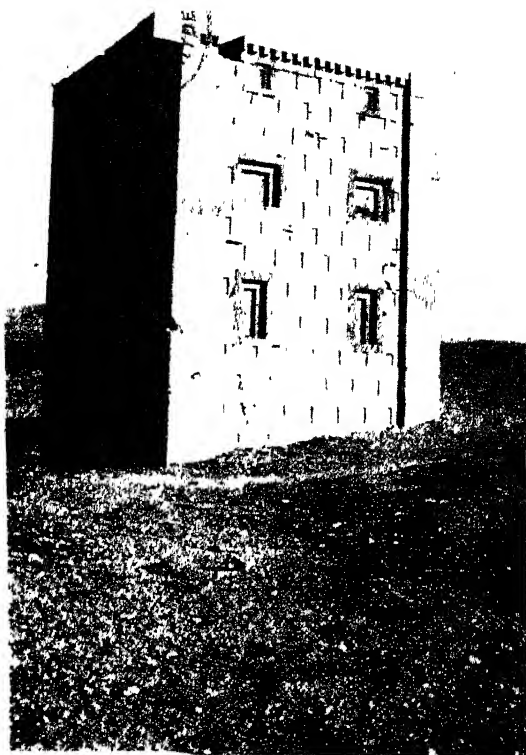
Inside the tomb are three sepulchres cut from the rock. The gallery is twenty-two yards long, and over six feet in breadth; and from it branch off three vaults, each containing three sepulchres. Each sepulchre is four feet high, and once had stone lids, the remains of which can now be seen. The roof of the gallery is flat, except at the far end where it is vaulted. At the back of the gallery is a blank wall, except high up where there is a recessed panel, which shows that an inscription was once intended. At the end is a little hole in the floor. In the sepulchre next to this, Darius's favourite eunuch lived for seven years. The lateral extensions to the left holding six more coffins must have been hollowed out later on.

The third tomb is in good preservation, but the facade of the fourth is blurred and defaced, as also are the capitals, and the cornice above the doorway, and the supporters of the platform. The fourth tomb is more accessible than the others. It has three arched recesses, each with a sepulchre, whose stone slabs have been broken. Both these have no inscriptions, and it is purely guess-work to think that the third tomb is the tomb of Xerxes, the fourth of Artaxerxes, while the tomb facing west is that of Darius II.

Opposite the fourth royal tomb, about twenty yards away, the ground rises in the form of an artificial elevation, and it is a square building, very like the ruined structure at Pasargadæ. It has various names, and is called by some the Nakkara Khaneh or Drum House, and by others the Kaabah-i-Zardusht or Shrine of Zoroaster. The building is square, twenty-three and a half feet in each direction, and thirty-five and a half feet from the base, which is at present concealed by the mound. It is made of solid blocks of limestone. A denticulated cornice runs round the summit. On three of its sides are recessed six window-cases in black basalt, the uppermost pair below the cornice being square, the middle pair square, but of larger dimensions, and the lower pair oblong. The fourth side facing the royal tomb has a doorway, and this was the entrance to the place. The surface on all sides is fitted with a number of uniform incisions one foot four inches long, five and a half inches broad, and one and a half inches deep. The doorway is six feet high, and five feet wide, and originally it was sixteen feet above the ground, and access was gained by a flight of steps. It was once closed by a stone block hung upon pivots, the grooves of which are still visible. Now it is about ten feet from the ground. The interior is a single chamber twelve feet square and eighteen feet high. The floor consists of slabs of stone, and the ceiling of two huge blocks. M. Dieulafoy made a discovery, that in the floor was an arrangement or slide, by which, with the aid of rollers, a heavy weight could be dragged into the interior. Below the chamber the substructure is solid. The surface stones were at one time torn away, to expose what lay behind. One of the four slabs on the roof was dislocated and displaced by an earthquake in the nineteenth century.



THIRD TOMB FACING SOUTH.



THE KAABEH-I-ZARDUSHT.

Many a suggestion has been offered as to what the building could be. The ceiling has been blackened by smoke, and some authors suggested that it was an Iranian fire-altar, but it is obviously not that, for it is totally different from any fire-altar that exists in ruins or on coins. Flandin and Coste thought that the chamber might have been used for embalming the royal corpse preparatory to burial. Why the embalmers should choose an unlighted cell, is difficult to say. M. Dieulafoy suggests that it is a mausoleum, and thinks that the King's body may have been temporarily deposited therein to await dissolution before being buried in its tomb. The idea is fanciful, and there has never been any record of such a practice. Lord Curzon agrees with Dieulafoy that it is a tomb, and goes so far as to suggest that if the Zindan at Pasargadæ was the tomb of Cambyzes, the father of Cyrus, this place might possibly be the tomb of Hystaspes, the father of Darius. He also suggests that it might be an older fashion of interment on account of the similarity to the Lycian tombs, which may have disappeared after the building of the rock-tomb by Darius. But similar buildings exist at Naubandajan and Firuzabad.

Two other suggestions still remain. Firstly, the building may be a fire-shrine or a *segrî*, like the *segrîs* of the modern Parsis that adjoin the Towers of Silence. It is very like a building where the sacred fire was kept burning in some hallowed urn. The difficulties are that there are absence of windows, and of a smoke-vent. Jackson gets over it by saying that that is no convincing argument against this view, "because smoke was regarded as the creation of the evil spirit and every effort was doubtless made to provide against its formation."

The other suggestion, which I personally think is more probable, is this. It might possibly have been a mortuary or a receptacle for the dead body before its final despatch. Zoroastrian bodies are always buried between sunrise and sunset. Difficulty might have been experienced in bringing the bodies from Persepolis to Naksh-i-Rustam in time for disposal, sudden deaths may have also caused a difficulty, and it was here that the body was left during the night with a priest saying prayers all night long. After the final prayers were said in the daytime and the final rites done, the body was taken out from there, and disposed of in the Towers of Silence, whose remains are still to be seen on the top of the cliff.

Sixty yards round the corner of the cliff, where it turns in a northerly direction, are two *Atash-Gahs* or fire-altars carved out of the living stone, thirteen feet above the plain. They are side by side, and of unequal dimensions, one being five and a half feet high, and the other five, and both four and a half feet square at the base, and taper inwards towards the summit to a square of three and two-thirds feet. Their sides are shaped in the form of filled-in arches, and there is a column at each corner. A sort of parapet runs round the top which is hollow, about eight inches deep, and one foot in width. It was in this hollow that incense and sandalwood were put upon the sacred flame. These fire-altars date back to Achæmenian times or perhaps are a little older.

Up the rocks as to overlook the tombs, there are several things to see. First a lone pillar carved from the solid rock, standing in a bluff, without either base or capital, and without any carving, five and a half feet long and one and a half feet in diameter. It does not appear to have belonged to any building, nor is there any inscription on it. Darius is known to have set up inscribed pillars at Tel-Al-Maskhutah in Egypt, and at Chaluf, and one in Thrace.

A little further up on the top of the rock, there are some squared and levelled places hewn out of the rock, and ascended by low steps. One of



FIRE-ALTARS, NAKSH-I-RUSTAM.



THIRD SASSANIAN TABLET—EQUESTRIAN COMBAT
(NAKSH-I-RUSTAM).

them is cut in such a manner as almost to form a trough with a level flooring in front of it. It had holes at the head and near the feet. These are probably dakhmas, or platforms for the exposure of the dead. Here are also little troughs similar to those seen at Shapur, and several odd little basins cut here and there in stone. It is possible all these were used for Zoroastrian rites, but by whom and at what period is very difficult to say. Further on are the "little holes or windows" that Morier speaks of, but there are no traces of inscriptions. The Sassanian dynasty was strongly Zoroastrian, and almost certainly had dakhmas for the disposal of the dead. In Achæmenian days, the Iranians had not adopted the Magian system of exposure of the dead, so if these platforms are attributed to Achæmenian times, they must have been employed by the Magians themselves.

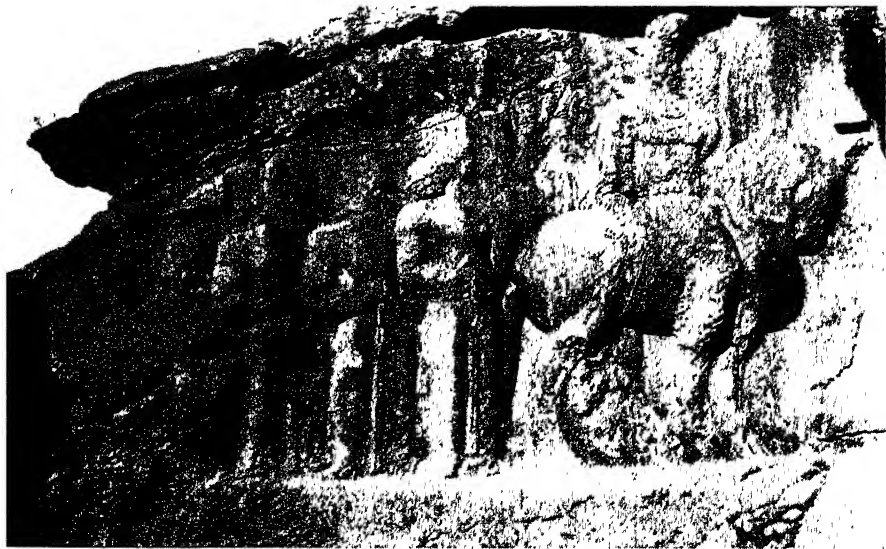
On the highest point of the rock, and just above the tombs, is a sort of parapet ascended by five roughly hewn steps. It is about the same age as the preceding, but nothing can be said with certainty.

Continuing now along the plain towards Persepolis, nearly opposite Naksh-i-Rajab, and close to the post-house at Puzeh, is a terrace of white limestone composed of massive blocks, arranged in two tiers, one on top of the other, the lower of which projects nearly two feet beyond the higher. The raised flooring is seven feet high and thirty-seven feet square. Some of the white blocks are ten feet in length and four feet deep. It is called the Takht-i-Taos or Throne of the Peacock, or Takht-i-Rustam (the Throne of Rustam). This might have been a throne platform. Its level is broken at the north-western corner by a large stone. Two hundred yards from it is a solitary block with a stepping stone in front of it, which might have been used as an altar.

Half a mile from the platform to the north was a stone doorway, consisting of side jambs, and a lintel with the figures of priests in long robes, chiselled in high relief. It is not there now. There was also a solitary column that rose among the bases of others, in the plain opposite the south-west angle of Persepolis. It was thrown down in A.D. 1803 by some wandering Iliats for the sake of the iron clamps which held its drums together.

The north side of the plain of Mervdasht is dotted here and there with the ruins of the ancient city of Istakhr, the majority of which occupy a space of rising ground a little to the east of the post of Puzeh. Here the river forms a loop. The ruins are very ancient, and their foundation is attributed to the Peshdadian dynasty, to Istakhr, the son of Tahmuras. Mustafi (A.D. 1340) states that "according to some, Istakhr was built by Kaiomars; but according to others, it was founded by his son, Istakhr, enlarged by Hoshang, and completed by Jemshid." Firdausi says that the city was in existence in the age of Kai Kaus, and had "a palace that was the glory of the royal family." Tabari (A.D. 923) says that it was to a place in Istakhr, called Diz-i-Nipisht (Stronghold of Records) that Zoroaster's patron, Vish-tasp, sent the original copy of the Avesta, which was engrossed in letters of gold. It was in use in Sassanian times, and here was brought the body of Yezdezird III, the last Sassanian King, after his assassination at Merv. Yakut (A.D. 1220) says "the houses of Istakhr are built of clay, or of stone covered over with plaster." By A.D. 1621 it was in ruins.

All that remains of Istakhr at the present day are the remains of a gateway, close to the mountain on the southern side. This gateway was the eastern entrance of the city, and consists of a centre passage for caravans, and two side alleys for foot passengers, the stone piers still being there. A little beyond this are the remains of what might have been a palace. There are bases and fragments of the shafts of eight pillars, and a fluted



SHAPUR AND BODYGUARD, NAKSH-I-RAJAB.

column, twenty-five feet high and two feet in diameter. The column has fallen down now.

In the plain, seven miles north-west of Persepolis are three rocky hills known as the Seh Gumbadan or the Three Domes. Their lower part consists of steep slopes, and the summit is sharp and jagged. Noldeke says the middle-most rock, called the Mian Koleh or Middle Fort, contained the citadel of Istakhr and the tanks. Upon the same rock were remains of a gateway, and towers of the old castle. The height of this rock is 1,200 feet above the plain. There are similar ruins on the adjacent rock.

Returning back to Puzeh, and taking the car from there we follow the main road to Shiraz. About one hundred yards to the south-east in a small natural recess in the base of the cliff on the left-hand side, and so hidden by boulders as to be easily missed, are the rock sculptures of the Naksh-i-Rajah. The rock has been artificially smoothed to receive the inscriptions, which have suffered greatly, and have been deliberately mutilated. The Minister of Shah Sefi I, tired of catering for European visitors, who wanted to see these places, sent sixty men with orders to deface the sculptures, to discourage the visits of Europeans. There are only three inscriptions of the Sassanian period, and the sides of the entrance converge towards the back wall of the natural rock.

First Tablet.—On the right-hand wall of the recess (western side) is the first tablet which represents the investiture of Ardeshir Babegan by the god Ormuzd. It is very like the bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam. It is twenty-one feet long and nine and a half feet high. They are both mounted on horseback, and Ormuzd, wearing the mural crown, extends the cydaris to the King.]

Second Tablet.—Situated on the rear wall of the niche is the second tablet which depicts Ormuzd and Ardeshir Babegan on foot. It is eighteen feet long and ten feet high. The central figures are Ormuzd (right) and Ardeshir (left) of colossal size. They face each other and hold the circlet in their right hands. Ormuzd as usual wears the mural crown, and carries a sceptre in his left hand, while Ardeshir is crowned with the inflated globe. Between the God and the King are two small boys whose statues are now nearly obliterated. They are supposed to be two sons of Shapur, born before he ascended the throne, but that is pure guess-work. Behind the King stands an unbearded personage who is holding a fly-flap. He may be a eunuch. Behind him again is a bearded bodyguard. Both these figures are nearly effaced. Behind Ormuzd, but in a separate panel, are two smooth-faced figures, with their backs turned upon him, and their hands lifted to their faces. To the left of the main tablet, on a fragment of the rock, is the bust of a figure, pointing with his finger to a Pehlavi inscription at a considerable height from the ground. In the Pehlavi inscription to which the fellow points his finger, are given the names of Shapur and Varahran, and it is presumed that Shapur I (A.D. 241-272) and his son Varahran II (A.D. 276-293) are meant.

Third Tablet.—The third tablet is the bas-relief on the north side of the recess and represents Shapur I and his bodyguard. The King is on horseback and part of the bodyguard on foot. The panel is twenty-three feet long by fourteen and a half feet broad. Shapur is riding in front, and wears the globular crown, the curled hair, the tunic fastened with a clasp on the left breast, and the streaming shulwars. The charger is life-like. Nine of his bodyguard follow him, with tall hats, bushy curls, and hands resting on their grounded swords. Three of them are on foot, and are standing leaning upon their long, straight swords. The rest are mounted. There is an inscription in Pehlavi and in Greek on the chest of Shapur's horse, which

serves to identify the King; and another inscription close by on the smooth rock. The following is a copy of the Greek inscription:—

390

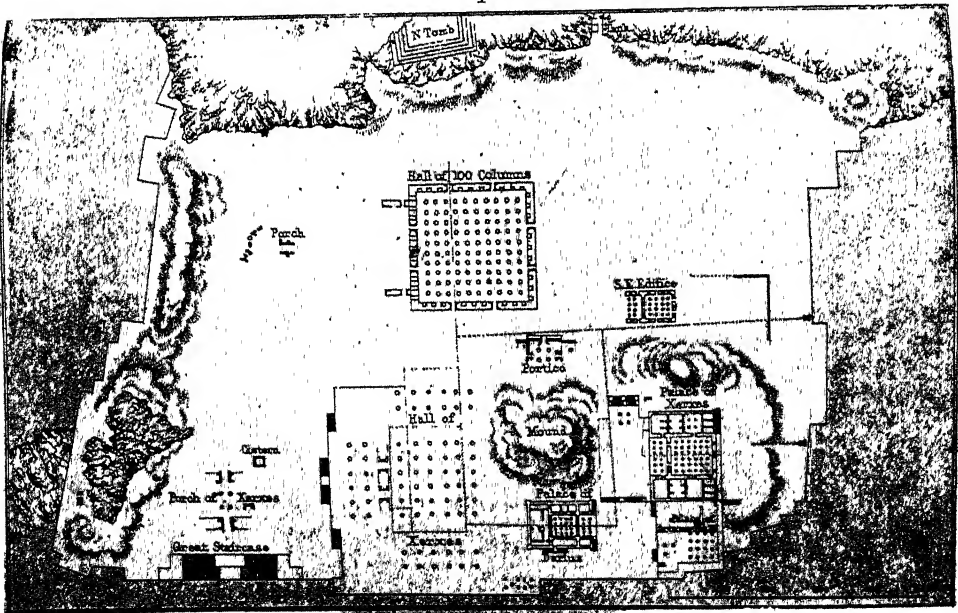
ΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΩ ΠΟΝΤΟΥ ΤΟ ΜΑΔΑ ΣΝΟΥΘΕΟΥ
 ΣΑΠΛΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ (ΑΡΙΑ) ΝΩΝ,
 ΚΑΙΑΝΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΕΚΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΘΕΩΝ (ΝΕΚΤΟΝΟΥ)
 ΜΑΣ [ΔΑ] ΣΝΟΥΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΤΑΚΑΡΣΥ [ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ]
 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΕΚΓΕΝΟ [ΥΣ ΘΕΩΝ]
 ΕΚΤΟΝΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΠΑΠΑΚΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ

“This is the image of the Ormuzd worshipping God, Sapor, King of Kings, Arian and non-Arian, of the race of Gods, son of the Ormuzd worshipping God, Artakshatr, King of Kings, Arian of the race of Gods, son of the god Papak, the King.”

About half-way between Puzeh and Persepolis a long tongue of land runs up between the hills. In a bay on the north-east side, a short way up the rocks are square openings. Each opening leads to a small chamber, about six feet long by three feet high. There are three complete chambers and two unfinished ones, all without any inscription. There is a small groove inside these chambers, at an angle from the doorway, and recesses at the top of the doorway inside. In the unfinished ones there is a trough, and in the rock above the largest hut, is another trough six feet long by two by one and a half feet deep. There is a deeper trough in the rock towards the east. Two of the finished chambers were on the south side, one on the north. They are probably rock tombs.

After leaving the Naksh-i-Rajab, the road continues south to Persepolis.

Persepolis





THE STAIRCASE, PERSEPOLIS.

From a photo by A. H. Johnson, Esq.



THE COLOSSI OF THE PORCH OF XERXES.

From a photo by A. H. Johnson, Esq.

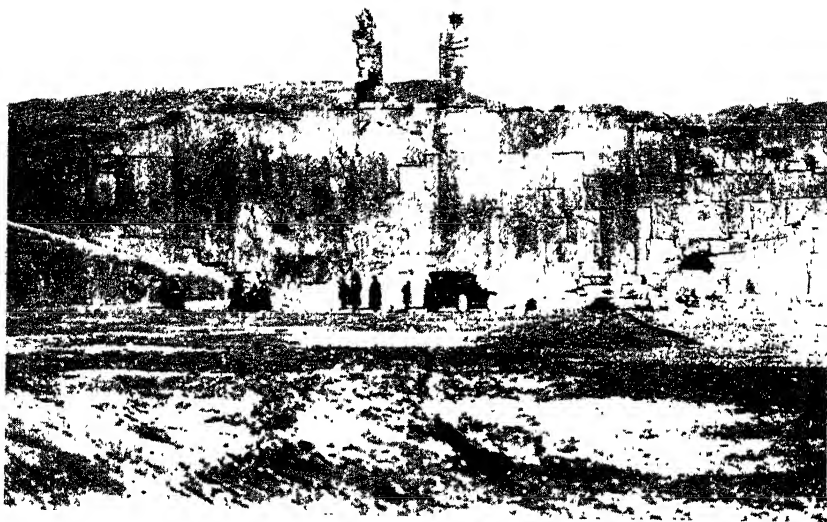
All the palaces of Persepolis have been built upon a platform cut out of the mountain base. The height of the platform is about twenty to fifty feet, its main length 1,523 feet, and its breadth from east to west nine hundred and twenty feet. The structures built on the platform are arranged in different levels. The lowest level to the south, about twenty feet in height, and one hundred and eighty feet broad, has no buildings on it. At a slightly higher level are the Propylæa of Xerxes, and the Hall of a Hundred Columns, whose height is thirty-five to forty feet above the plain; ten feet higher up than the preceding is the Hall of Xerxes, and ten feet higher still is the level that has the palaces of Darius and Xerxes.

Access to the palaces is got by a main staircase which is recessed in the front wall of the platform. There are two flights of steps, diverging to right and left, and each containing fifty-eight steps. At the top of each flight is a small platform or landing, and then the flights converge and turn towards each other, and terminate in another landing seventy feet long on a level with the top of the platform. This upper flight of steps has forty-eight steps each. All these steps are so shallow that horsemen ten abreast can ride up and down with ease. The steps are twenty-two and a half feet wide by fifteen inches broad, and several of them are hewn out of a single piece of limestone.

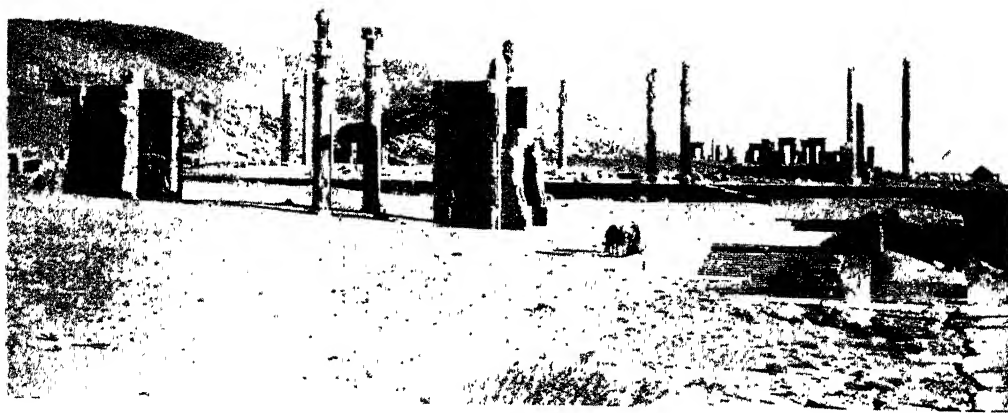
Opposite the top landing, and forty-five feet from it are the remains of the Porch of Xerxes. It originally consisted of a bull-flanked portal facing the plain, and interior hall of four columns, and then another bull-flanked portal facing the mountains. The bulls are two in number, standing on pedestals, five feet above the ground, and face the spectator. On the inner walls the hinder parts of their bodies project boldly from the surface, while one hind leg is in advance of the other. They have colossal wings. Their legs in front are in an attitude of repose. These bulls are human-headed, and have the legs of a bull. The heads have been badly defaced. There is a collar round the neck. Enormous masses of curly hair, tightly frizzed and rounded, hang on the shoulders. The dimensions of the bulls are seventeen and three-quarter feet in height and nineteen feet in length, the piers being thirty-five and a half feet high, twenty-one feet long, and six feet thick, the breadth of the intervening corridor being twelve feet. The bulls are very like the Assyrian winged bulls, but differ from them in that they have four legs, while the Assyrian bulls had five, the fifth being introduced behind the fore-legs so that when viewed in profile, only four legs would be visible.

High up, above the bulls, on the inner walls of the gateway are chiselled in parallel tablets on all four columns, inscriptions in Iranian, Susian and Babylonian, the following lines:—

- (1) A great God is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) I am Xerxes, the great King, King of Kings, King of the countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius the King, the Achæmenide.
- (3) *Says Xerxes the great King*:—"By the grace of Ahura Mazda. I have made this colonnade, whereon are depicted all the countries. Much else beautiful was done throughout Iran which I did, and which my father did; whatever work seems beautiful, all that we did by the grace of Ahura Mazda."
- (4) *Says Xerxes the King*:—"Let Ahura Mazda protect me and my kingdom and what was done by me, and what was done by my father, let Ahura Mazda protect."



PERSEPOLIS FROM THE SHIRAZ ROAD.



From a photograph by Ernest Bristow, Esq.
GENERAL VIEW OF PERSEPOLIS.

Behind the entrance gateway, and the first pair of colossi stand two of the original four fluted columns, forty-seven feet high. They supported the roof of a central hall eighty-two feet square. The left-hand one is composed of three blocks, and has thirty-nine flutings, which do not exactly correspond.

Beyond the two fluted columns are two more massive stone piers, and two more winged colossi, facing the mountains. The wings sweep into the air, and here also they differ from Assyrian bulls, whose wings are laid back. These bulls are also human-faced, the features mutilated. The curly beard is very well shown, and earrings hang from their ears. Curls hang down to the shoulders, and they wear a lofty tiara terminating in a fringe of feathers, and circular bands curling upwards in the shape of horns are in the front. On top of both the piers are similar panels of cuneiform inscriptions as those on the others.

The two pairs of piers and the fluted columns made up the "Portal of all Nations" (as Xerxes himself called it), through which at No Ruz, envoys of tributary lands brought gifts to the King.

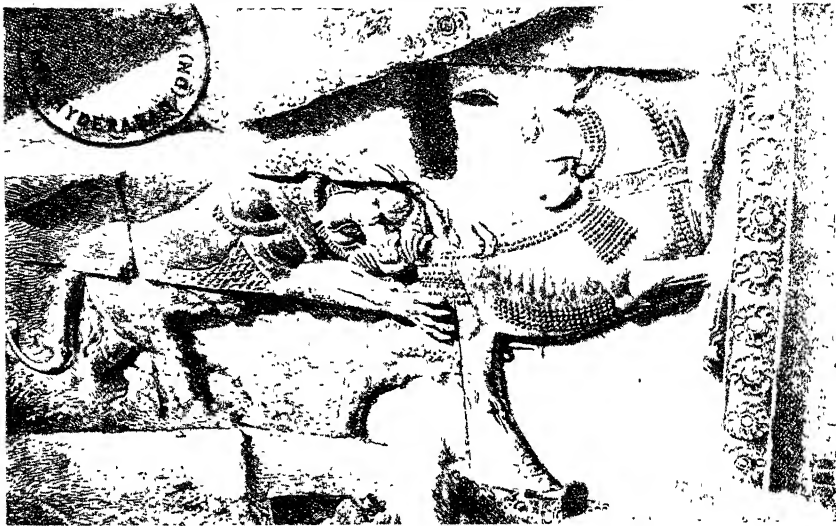
To the left or north of the Porch of Xerxes are the foundations of a vanished structure. There are a few bases of pillars, with a single drum of an unfluted column. To the right or south of the porch is a tank hewn out of the rock, and measuring eighteen by fifteen feet. The tank is surrounded by a parapet three feet above the surface. This tank was originally supposed to have been fed by one of the subterranean aqueducts beneath the surface of the platform, and it perhaps irrigated a garden between the porch and the Hall of Xerxes. The tank is filled up with dirt and mud at present.

From the Porch of Xerxes we come to the Hall of Xerxes, the ruined columns of which gave it its name of Chihil Minar (or Forty Columns). About fifty-four yards south of the Porch of Xerxes is a staircase with sculptured adornments. The sculptures extend for a total length of seventy-two yards; and the original height of the hall was eleven and a half feet above the level of the Propylæa.

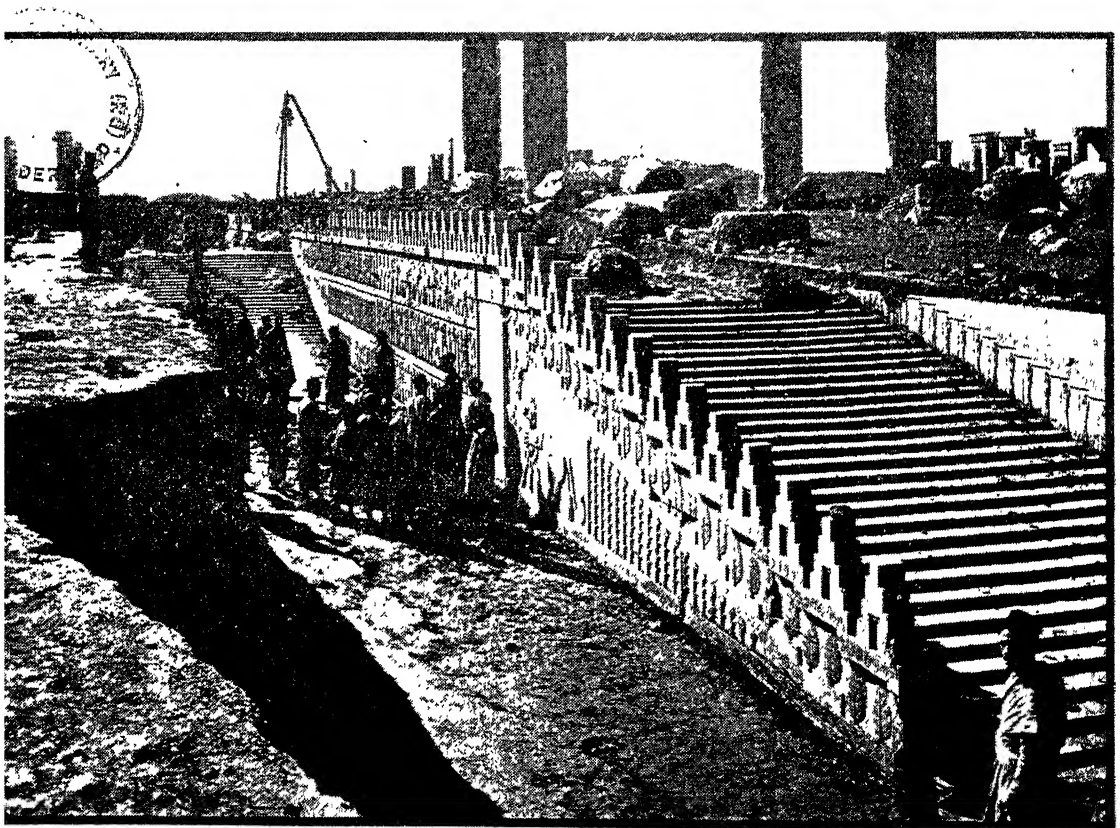
Four staircases lead to the top of the platform, two of which converge towards a landing in the centre, while the other two staircases are on the northern and southern extremity respectively. Each flight contains thirty-one steps, which are fifteen and a half feet long, fourteen inches broad, and four inches deep. The front wall near the stairways contains sculptures. In the centre is a smoothed out panel on which there is no inscription. On the right side are three armed guards with spears and shields, facing the panel, and on the left side are four spearmen with quivers, also facing the panel. In the triangular space between each of the groups and the base angle of the staircase is the figure of a bull being vanquished by a lion whose claws and teeth are fixed into its rear flank.

On the main wall of the terrace is an elaborately carved frieze. In three rows, or rather in two, for the uppermost row has been sawn off in two, leaving only the lower halves of the bodies of the subject nations, are seen subject nations bringing tribute to Xerxes. The two-humped camel is also seen. At either end, at the angle formed by the steps is shewn the fight between the lion and the bull. Close to these triangular panels are tablets with cuneiform inscriptions. That on the eastern side has been obliterated, but the one on the western side reads:—

- (1) A great God is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) I am Xerxes, the great King, King of Kings, King of the countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius, the King, the Achæmenide.



COMBAT BETWEEN LION AND BULL.



PERSEPOLIS, STAIRCASE.

By kind permission of the Iran League.

- (3) *Says Xerxes, the great King* :—"What was done by me here, and what was done by me afar, all this I did by the grace of Ahura Mazda : let Ahura Mazda protect me with the gods, and my kingdom, and what was done by me."

The triple row of figures representing the subject nations, and each about three feet in height, march towards the centre; a corresponding procession advances from the opposite sides. These represent different classes of individuals. Those on the left with lances, chariots, etc., represent the guards of the King or his courtiers; those on the right sub-divided into smaller groups by likenesses of cypresses are the various subject races, as shown by their different physiognomy and costumes. The tribute they bring are the objects they escort, viz., oxen, rams, asses, camels, fruits, vases, ornaments, etc. There can be little doubt that this depicted faithfully the ceremonials that took place in the Audience Hall above, when the King came to Persepolis annually at No Ruz, the time of the vernal equinox, to receive the tribute of his subjects.

Mounting the steps to the upper level of the platform, thirteen columns are seen, which formed part of a central hall supported by six rows of six columns each, with advanced porticoes on three of its sides, north, east and west containing two rows of six columns each, a total of seventy-two columns. The bases of the other columns are still standing, as also the fragments of some of the drums. From there it can be seen that the interior surfaces where the drums were joined together are smooth and level. Holes too are visible in them, which contained the dowels that joined them together. Some of these columns are surmounted by two demi-bulls with necks hollowed out to support the architrave in the same manner as in the Porch of Xerxes. The shafts of these pillars are formed of three blocks; in the lateral porticoes, the bulls' heads are superimposed on a shaft of four blocks. All the seventy-two columns were fluted, and all were of the same height. Those in the central hall rested upon a single square plinth, those in the porticoes had an ornate circular base, like the columns in the Propylæa, a campanulated block, with long leaves, whose points are turned downwards.

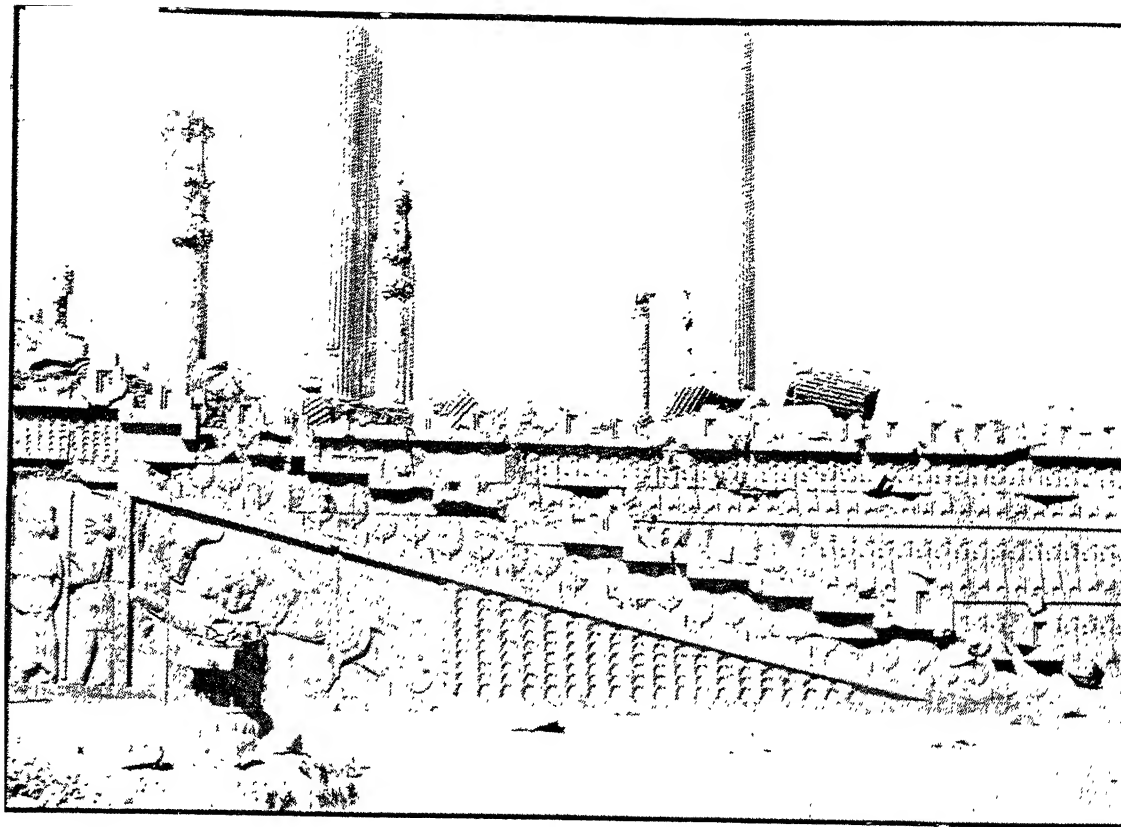
The outer porticoes measuring one hundred and twenty and a half feet by twenty-eight feet are separated from the central hall by seventy-one feet. Between the north portico and the hall are four massive substructures. Through and around the great hall Flandin and Coste traced the remains of subterranean aqueducts. This hall is one hundred and forty feet long in each direction. It was in this hall, under a canopy of blue and gold, the King of Kings sat in state, to receive homage and tribute from his people.

The roof of this hall had an architrave or beam, and the wood was made of cedar, imported from the Taurus or the Lebanon. Traces of cedar wood have been discovered on the platform which supports the theory. Curzon¹ thinks the roofs were covered over, probably protected from the elements by a layer of rammed clay.

Palace of Darius

Passing through the Hall of Xerxes from north to south, at a higher level than the preceding and to the south of it is the Palace of Darius. This palace faces south, while all the other buildings are turned towards the north or north-west. It consists of a porch of eight columns arranged in two rows on the south front, and a hypostyle hall of sixteen pillars in four rows of four each. There are traces of chambers on the longer side and at the back. The central colonnade is not square but oblong. On the southern side are two flights of steps, one at each end of the terrace. In later times, a third staircase was added, and another entrance made on the western side.

¹ Curzon, "Persia."



PALACE OF XERXES.

By kind permission of the Iran League.

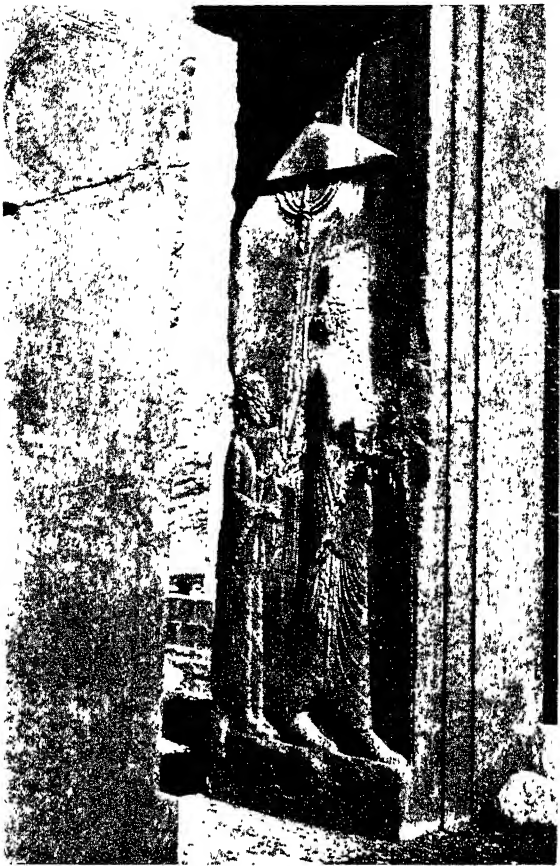
The dimensions of the platform of the palace are one hundred and thirty-two and a half feet long by ninety-six feet broad. Mounting the western steps, an inscription is seen on the wall of the platform; there is the lion and bull in either spandrel of the stairway. The tablet says that the staircase was the work of Artaxerxes III or Ochus (361-338 B.C.), and reads as follows:—

- (1) A great God is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made me Artaxerxes, King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) *Says Artaxerxes the great King, King of Kings, King of countries, King of this earth:—*“I am the son of Artaxerxes the King; Artaxerxes was the son of Darius, the King; Darius was the son of Artaxerxes the King; Artaxerxes was the son of Xerxes the King; Xerxes was the son of Darius the King; Darius was the son of Hystaspes by name; Hystaspes was the son of Arsames by name, the Achæmenide.”
- (3) *Says Artaxerxes the King:—*“This stone staircase was made by me.”
- (4) *Says Artaxerxes the King:—*“Let Ahura Mazda and the god Mithra protect me, and this country, and what was done by me.”

At the top of the steps there is a doorway leading to a porch from which a second doorway conducts into the central hall. On either jamb of this doorway is sculptured a fight between the King and the griffin, which is so often seen with monotonous reiteration in other buildings. The King thoroughly unconcerned, plunges a dagger with his left hand into the belly of the griffin, which rears on its hind legs before him, putting its right leg on that of the King. The King with his right hand grasps the horn projecting from the griffin's head. The right paw of the monster is on the left arm of the King, while the left forepaw grasps the King's right arm.

The central hall is a square of fifty feet and inside at present are a number of blocks of chiselled stone coloured black, but with a good degree of polish. They are detached from each other, and probably constituted part of the wall of the building. Some of the largest of them with projecting fluted cornices are doorways, while the smaller ones are either windows or niches (*takhches*) forming a receptacle for furniture. Niches at the present day form the principal part in the architecture of modern Iranian houses. On the west side there are two doorways and two niches; on the north side two doorways and three niches; on the east side are one doorway and three niches; and on the south side are one doorway and four windows. In this doorway is another relief, viz., the King going out of the palace, while two attendants are holding an umbrella above his head. On the floor of the central hall are the remains of the sixteen columns that supported the roof, but there are no remains of the shafts or capitals. Outside the southern wall there were eight columns in the portico, the east and west walls of which each contained a doorway and a niche. At the summit of the two main flights of steps is an angle-pier twenty-two feet high, having in its summit incised grooves, showing the way in which the beams of the roof rested upon them. Traces of apartments can be seen on the outside of the portico, and on either side of the central hall, and behind the latter on the north.

The palace is full of inscriptions. Some of them run round the borders of window frames and niches, and some are chiselled in triple tablets above the bas-reliefs on the inner sides of the doors. On the door-posts, above the sculpture of the King, are the words: “Darius, the great King, King



KING DARIUS—ATTENDANT HOLDING AN
UMBRELLA, PERSEPOLIS.



THE COMBAT OF KING AND GRIFFIN.

From a photo by A. H. Johnson, Esq.

of Kings, King of the countries, the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide, who built this tacara."

On the garment of the King are the words: "Darius the great King, the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide."

Repeated on the window cornices are the words: "Stone window cornice made in the royal house of King Darius."

In the south-west corner on the great angle-pier is a cuneiform inscription of Xerxes which reads:—

- (1) A great God is Ahura Mazda who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) I am Xerxes, the great King, King of Kings, King of the countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, son of Darius the King, the Achæmenide.
- (3) *Says Xerxes the great King*:—"By the grace of Ahura Mazda this dwelling Darius the King made who was my father; let Ahura Mazda protect me with the gods, and what was done by me, and what was done by my father Darius, the King (all) this let Ahura Mazda protect with the gods."

It was on the south doorway of this building that the Pehlavi inscriptions of Shapur II and III were engraved. Here is also inscribed an Iranian ode by Sultan Ibrahim, the son of Shah Rukh and grandson of Timur; here are also two inscriptions in honour of Nasr-ed-din Shah done by a Shirazi, and also an inscription in Cufic.

On the front of the stylobate of the palace are two processions of armed warriors, with lances, and with quivers on their backs, marching towards a central panel on which are cuneiform inscriptions, the translations of which are appended below. Two other panels on the outer extremities also contain cuneiform inscriptions. At either end is a staircase, and on the spandrels are the lion and the bull; on the inner wall are a row of carved figures. The readings of the cuneiform inscriptions of twenty-four lines on the south retaining wall are:—

- (1) The great Ahura Mazda, who is the greatest of the gods, he made Darius King; he gave him the kingdom; by the grace of Ahura Mazda, Darius is King.
- (2) *Says Darius the King*:—"This is the country Iran, which Ahura Mazda gave me, which, beautiful, possessing good houses, possessing good men, by the grace of Ahura Mazda, and (by the achievements) of me, Darius, the King, does not fear an enemy."
- (3) *Says Darius the King*:—"Let Ahura Mazda bear me aid with the royal gods and let Ahura Mazda protect this country from an evil host, from famine, from deceit; may not an evil host, nor famine, nor deceit come upon this country; this favour I pray of Ahura Mazda with the royal gods; this let Ahura Mazda give me with the royal gods."

The Elamite version adds that Darius was the first to fortify the place, which was not previously a stronghold.

The other inscription reads:—

- (1) I am Darius, the great King, King of Kings, King of many countries, the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide.

- (2) *Says Darius the King* :—" By the grace of Ahura Mazda, these are the countries which I have brought into my possession with the help of the Iranian Army, and which feared me, and brought me tribute : Susiana, Media, Babylonia, Arabia, Assyria, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Sparda, the Ionians, who are of the main land, and those who are on the sea, and the countries which are on the east, Sagartia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, India, Gandara, Scythia, the Macæ."
- (3) *Says Darius the King* :—" If thus thou shalt think, ' May I not fear an enemy, protect this Iranian people : if the Iranian people shall be protected, welfare for a long time undisturbed will through Ahura descend upon this Royal House.' "

Palace of Artaxerxes

Almost due south of the Palace of Darius, and in the extreme south-west corner of the upper platform, above the unoccupied level, are the ruins of a building, with a mutilated double stairway on the north face, upon the front of which are a row of processional figures. There are two cuneiform inscriptions, like those on the western stairway of the Palace of Darius, which state that this was the work of Artaxerxes III or Ochus (361-338 B.C.). There is nothing much to see, only a number of bases of columns.

Palace of Xerxes

To the east of the preceding palace, and on the highest elevation of all, is the Palace of Xerxes. It is very like the Palace of Darius, but the building faces north instead of south. Access to the platform is gained by a quadruple flight of steps on the eastern side, and by a double flight on the western side, but they are now in ruins. The top of the stairs leads to the main portico of the palace where are the bases of two rows of columns of six each. This leads through doorways into the central hall, where there were thirty-six columns, in six rows of six each. The hall was a square of about eighty-seven and a half feet each way. All that now remains are the bases of the pillars. Down the centre of the hall runs a subterranean aqueduct of the type that goes under the Hall of Xerxes. There are four small compartments on either side ; the two leading out from the pillared hall contained four columns each. There are inscriptions and sculptures on the doorways and niches, the King being followed by attendants with fly-whisks or umbrellas. In other windows, attendants are leading animals, or carrying vases and dishes. On the southern side, at the eastern and western ends are two staircases leading on to the platform, in the outer front of which there are four niches with a cornice. The curious part about this building is that from the south-western corner there is another flight of steps hewn in the rock at right angles to the terrace leading up from the lower to the upper platform. This flight of steps has neither parapet nor sculptures.

The cuneiform inscriptions read :—

I. Above the sculpture of the King, repeated on door-posts on north and on east, in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian :—

" Xerxes the great King, King of Kings, the son of Darius the King, the Achæmenide."

II. On huge door jamb, the inscription is the same as that on the south stairs of the Palace of Darius, and the translation has been given. It is a trilingual inscription in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian.

III. On two slabs, and on wall besides the steps in the palace, the inscription is also in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian and reads :—

- (1) A great god is Ahura Mazda, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
- (2) I am Xerxes, the great King, King of Kings, King of the countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, son of Darius, the King, the Achæmenide.
- (3) *Says Xerxes, the great King* :—" By the grace of Ahura Mazda, this dwelling I made; let Ahura Mazda protect me with the gods, and my kingdom, and what was done by me."

Between the terrace on the north, and the Hypostyle Hall of Xerxes, is a mound. Messrs. Stolze and Andreas drove a trench through a part of this mound, but found nothing except the unfinished work of masons.

South-East Edifice

About a hundred and eighty yards behind, and to the east of the Palace of Xerxes, is another building half buried in the ground. The niches and doorways are composed of a blackish stone of the type found in the Palace of Darius. The central hall is about eighty-nine feet in length by sixty-one feet in breadth, preceded by a portico fifty and a half feet by thirty and a half feet. The central hall contained sixteen columns in four rows of four each, while the portico contained eight columns in two rows of four each. There are no traces of lateral chambers, but there are a few bas-reliefs, sculptural images of the King with the attendant carrying a fly-whisk in the south door, and an attendant with an umbrella in the north doorway, while the east and west depict the combat of the King with the griffin. Unfortunately, there is no inscription to identify the palace, but it is evident it is a royal palace, and might have been the residence of Xerxes when he was Crown Prince.

Central Edifice

Behind the big mound that flanks the Palace of Darius on the east is a building known as the Central Edifice. It consists of three great doorways, the inner surfaces of which have bas-reliefs showing the King seated, or standing under an umbrella, while the God Ormuzd floats overhead. In the east doorway, the relief shows the King seated on a triple-staged throne supported by three rows of nine figures each with uplifted arms. In the centre, between the north and south doorways are the bases of four pillars. There are no inscriptions to identify this structure. It is sometimes called "The Portico of Darius."

Obscure Edifice

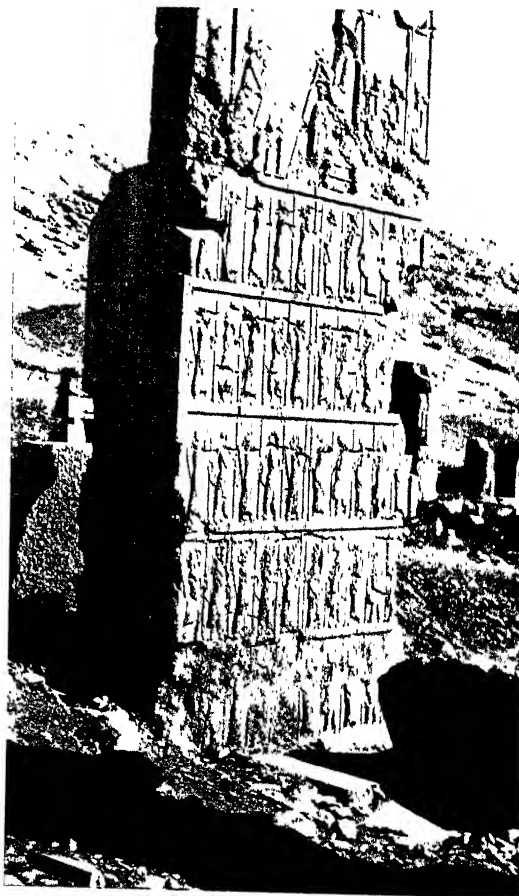
To the north-west of the Palace of Darius are traces of yet another building called by some authors "The House of the Women"; the assumption being, as there was not sufficient accommodation for himself and his harem in the Palace of Darius, his slaves, wives and children had to be accommodated in a separate building. The building is too indeterminate to give any idea of what it could have been, and this is pure guess-work.

The Hall of a Hundred Columns

Adjoining the central edifice on the east, and nearest of all the ruins to the mountain base, at the same level as the Porch of Xerxes and the largest of the palatial buildings is the Hall of a Hundred Columns, erected by Darius to hold ceremonial functions. It consists of a single great hall,



SOUTH DOORWAY, HALL OF A HUNDRED COLUMNS.



NORTH DOORWAY, HALL OF A HUNDRED COLUMN

the interior dimensions being a square of two hundred and twenty-five feet. Its roof was supported by a hundred columns, in ten rows of ten each. On the north was a portico of sixteen columns in two rows of eight each. The dimensions of the portico were one hundred and eighty feet by fifty-one feet and on either side of it were gigantic figures of bulls facing northwards. From the portico, two doorways conduct into the Hall of a Hundred Columns. The hall had forty-four stone doorways, windows or niches, which were once united together by sun-dried bricks plastered with enamelled tiles which have completely disappeared. Not a single pillar now survives, but it is presumed they were thirty-seven feet high, with campanulate bases and bull capitals. The interior of the hall at the present day consists of a jumble of capitals, cornices, pillar bases and drums, together with bits of carbonised cedar wood buried beneath a mass of debris.

There are bas-reliefs on all the doorways. In the east and west doorways, there is the usual combat between King and griffin. On the south doorway, the King is seated on a throne which is supported on a threefold terrace, upheld by the arms of subject nationalities who are disposed in parallel rows of five. A canopy with tasselled fringe is outstretched over his head, and above all is the figure of Ormuzd.

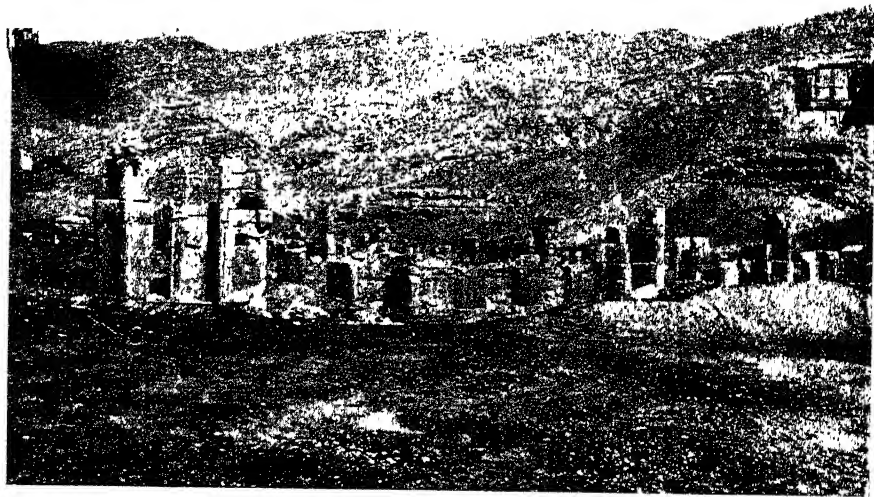
On the north doorway, the King is sitting in state on a high-backed throne, while behind him are guards, and an attendant with a fly-whisk. In front of him on the ground are two censers, behind which are two figures, probably Ambassadors or Ministers come to make obeisance to the King of Kings. Below are five superimposed rows of warriors, with spears, bows, quivers, etc., and with different headgear and dress, showing that they belong to different countries, there being fifty warriors in all. As usual, the King has a tiara upon his head, with bushy curled hair, and a long frizzed beard.

There is a definite absence of any groove or sockets in the doorways, as in the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, which supports the theory that this was merely an audience hall, especially as the doorways could only have been closed or concealed by hangings. This Audience Hall or Throne Room, we are justified in assuming, was the work of Darius, son of Hystaspes. Here he sat in royal state.

On the soil above the pavement, during excavations done some time ago, was found a thick layer of ashes which, microscopic examination pronounced to be carbonised cedar, of which not a vestige has been seen in any of the other palaces. These then are the remains of the cedar roof, which crumbled into ashes where it fell, bringing down with it the columns and supports as well. This was the hall, the destruction of which by fire was due to the drunken Alexander, and the torches of his soldiers. Was it drunkenness, premeditation, or the instigation of the courtesan Thais? Whatever the cause, it was certainly Alexander that brought about this desolation that now reigns supreme.

Some sixty-three yards to the north of this hall are the remains of a bull-flanked Propylæum or Porch, that once led to the Audience Hall itself. A few dilapidated blocks of stone and mutilated columns are all that remains of it now.

Ancient travellers have described several underground passages in Persepolis, the entrances to which were far more exposed than now. In parts they are hewn in the rock, in other cases they are paved and lined with stone. In all probability they were channels for the passage of water, and either served as aqueducts to convey drinking water or water to the gardens from the hills, or acted as drains, carrying away rain-water, or surplus water from the platform.



THE HALL OF A HUNDRED COLUMNS.
TO THE RIGHT IN THE KUH-I-RAHMAT IS THE NORTH TOMB.

Besides the mound previously referred to where were found remains of mason's unfinished work, there are several other bits of unfinished work, probably as a result of the fall of the monarchy itself. There are staircases on which the sculptures were only in part executed; there are tablets on which there are no inscriptions and stones can be seen with chisel marks on them.

Royal Tombs

The only other points of historic interest are the series of three rock tombs carved in the hill called the Kuh-i-Rahmat, behind the platform, and in immediate proximity to where the kings had lived. The first mausoleum, known as the North Tomb, is almost immediately behind the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and has an outlook rather more to south than west; the second is in a recess a little to the south-east of the platform, and is known as the Middle Tomb; the third is on the outer edge of the sloping rock, about three-quarters of a mile farther to the south, but was never completed. The tombs, unlike those at Naksh-i-Rustam, are not hewn high up in the vertical rock, nor are they inaccessible. In the case of the North Tomb, however, an attempt was made to render access difficult by means of a wall built up of big polygonal stones in five tiers or terraces from the lower level. Again these tombs are a bit smaller than the ones at the Naksh-i-Rustam, their height being seventy-nine feet, breadth of the upper limb thirty-three feet, and the breadth of the transverse limb containing the rock chamber fifty-four and a half feet. The doorways of these tombs are surrounded with three rows of carved rosettes on the lintel and jambs; and there is a frieze carved on the front of the architrave which supports the throne.

The four tombs of Naksh-i-Rustam, with the exception of that of Darius I (521-485 B.C.), have been hypothetically assigned to Xerxes (485-465 B.C.), Artaxerxes I or Longimanus (465-424 B.C.), and Darius II or Nothus (424-405 B.C.). Similarly the three tombs at Persepolis have been assigned to the other sovereigns of the Achæmenian dynasty. The North Tomb is believed to be the resting-place of Artaxerxes II or Mnemon (405-361 B.C.): the Middle Tomb is presumed to be the mausoleum of Artaxerxes III or Ochus (361-338 B.C.). The unfinished tomb, easily accessible from the ground but never finished, is attributed to Arses (338-336 B.C.) or more likely to Darius III or Codomannus (336-330 B.C.), whose overthrow by Alexander and subsequent death put an end to the dynasty and was the cause of the tomb never having been completed.

North Tomb.—The front is exposed to the base of the doorway, conducting into the tomb. The lower part has been forcibly broken away. Entering by the doorway we come to a chamber or vestibule with arched wall, hewn out of the rock. At a distance of nine feet from the door is a sarcophagus four feet high, and one foot behind it is the second sarcophagus, made out of the solid rock. These sarcophagi are nine and one-third feet long, four feet high and four feet broad. Their broken lids which were formerly arched at the top still lie over the openings.

The North Tomb has several inscriptions on it, and most of the figures can be identified. Mr. A. W. Davis, H.B.M.'s Consul at Shiraz, made the discovery, and sent me the identification of the figures of the subject races which I append below. Starting from the top row and reading from the left, the names are :—

1. Parsa; 2. Mada; 3. Uvaja; 4. Parthava; 5. Inscription obliterated, probably Haraiva; 6. Figure and inscription both gone; probably Bakhtrish; 7. Figure and inscription both gone, probably Suguda; 8 (Uvaraz) miya, the part inside the brackets being restored. 9. Zaranka; 10. Harauvatiya; 11. Thatagush; 12. Candara; 13. Hindush; 14. Saka Haumavarka.

Lower Row.—15. Saka Tigrakhauda : 16. Babirush ; 17. Athuriya ; 18. Arabaya : 19. Mudraya ; 20. Arminiya ; 21. Hatpatuka ; 22. Spardiya ; 23. Unknown ; 24. Sakaparadavaia ; 25. (Illegible) ; 26. Yauna ; 27. Puntaya ; 28. Kushiya outside the throne on the left ; 29. Karka on right ; 30. probably Machiya.

Middle Tomb.—About three hundred yards to the south is the second rock tomb, which is very like the preceding, but differing from it in containing three arched recesses at the back of the main vestibule, each containing a sarcophagus.

South Tomb.—This tomb is at a little distance from the others. Its lower part is hewn out of the rock, but its upper portion is made up of large rectangular stones. There is no sign of an entrance, and there are a large number of loose blocks of stone in front. The familiar sculpture of Ormuzd, the King, the fire-altars and the sun is there, and so is the terrace, but immediately below the cornice of the terrace, the work has been suspended, showing that the death of the monarch or the collapse of the dynasty must have abruptly taken place. This tomb is situated near the level of the plain.

This is all that remains of Persepolis, the ancient capital of the Achæmenian dynasty, and the autumn residence of its kings. From the early Istakhr, whose ruins can be seen at the mouth of the valley of the Pulvar, to the cliff wall and rock tombs of Naksh-i-Rustam on the north, and to the palace platform on the south, and even perhaps on the fronting plain, the city of Darius and Xerxes must have stretched. Whether the royal platform was inside the city or outside it, is difficult to say. This was once one of the wonders of the ancient world, upon which Alexander descended, and surrendered the city to his soldiery for plunder and burned its palaces. To-day, it is but a crumbling mass of ruins, and as Omar Khayyam says :—

“ They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The courts where Jamshid gloried and drank deep.”

History of Destruction

The destruction of the Hall of a Hundred Columns is certainly due to Alexander. The fall of the Iranian monarchy, the neglect of the Seleucidæ and the Parthians contributed to the decay of Persepolis. The Sassanian dynasty transferred their capital from here. From the time of the Arab invasion commenced a series of wholesale mutilations, and defacements of the faces of the kings wherever they could be reached. The Iranians have carried away stones from here to build their own houses. Shah Abbas the Great took away the marble from here for his own palaces and mosques ; and so did Imamkuli Khan, the Viceroy of Fars, for his capital at Shiraz ; the Minister of Shah Sefi I, disgusted at the number of Europeans who visited Persepolis, and for whose entertainment he was required to provide, sent down sixty men with orders to destroy every sculpture on which they could lay their hands, and to this ruffian is attributed the wilful mutilation of the sculptures at the Naksh-i-Rajab. Moreover, travellers too have played a part in damaging the structures, by wanting to carry away curios from there. One European confessed to having taken a mason from Shiraz, and blunted all his tools in the effort to break off and carry away desirable fragments and shattered several figures to pieces.¹

Persepolis is known to the modern Iranian as Takht-i-Jamshed. Everything old in Iran, in modern times is attributed to Rustam, and everything “ Khailay qadeem ” or very old, is attributed to Jamshed. Persepolis belongs to the latter class.

¹ Curzon, “ Persia.”

Note.—Recent excavations have been done by Professor Herzfeld in Persepolis.

CHAPTER XLII

SHIRAZ

SHIRAZ was founded or rebuilt in A.D. 694 by Mohammed, son of Yusuf Takali, but the castle on the northern mountain and the great well are very much older, and were built in pre-Mahomedan days. It was improved and beautified by the Dilemi rulers. The Buyid ruler Abu Kalanjar Sultan-ed-Dowleh fortified Shiraz with a wall twelve miles in circuit. The channel of Ruknabad, had been excavated and named by the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, father of the famous Asad-ed-Dowleh. Timur invaded Shiraz, and the great wall was no deterrent to him. The various dynasties of Atabegs who governed Fars embellished the city. Towers were added by Sherif-ed-din Mahmud Shah. In 1474, the walls were said to be twenty miles in circumference, and the town contained 200,000 inhabitants. On the accession of the Sefavi dynasty, Shiraz lost much of its importance, and by 1668 was described in ruins. It, however, owes most of its architectural beauty to Kerim Khan Zend (A.D. 1751 to 1779), who ruled in Shiraz as a Vakil or Regent on behalf of a Sefavi puppet. He rebuilt the walls of stone with bastions twenty-eight feet high and ten feet thick, dug a deep fosse outside, built a citadel and palace inside, and constructed the beautiful bazaar that bears his name, mosques, Madrasschs and caravanserais. But the eunuch ruler Agha Mohammed Khan levelled the stone walls to the ground, and replaced them by mud walls, and reduced the city from a capital to a provincial town.

In 1891 occurred tobacco riots in which the leader was a fanatical Mullah, Haji Sayed Ali Akbar. He was seized and banished, but was allowed to return the following year. He was then degraded and imprisoned, and forced to leave the city, but in 1893 he was again a conspicuous leader in a serious riot. In 1901 another serious riot took place in which the Iranian Telegraph Offices were wrecked.

In 1929 Shiraz was completely cut off from Bushire and Isfahan by the Qashqai Lurs, who rose in rebellion and besieged the place. The Government troops showed masterly inactivity. Eventually a satisfactory agreement was concluded.

The Ark or Citadel is an imposing structure, about eighty yards square, surrounded by mud walls, with towers at four corners adorned with bricks arranged in patterns. It is the Governor's residence. One face of the building fronts the principal maidan. On its northern side is a large building, formerly the Divan Khaneh or Audience Hall of Kerim Khan Zend. An arched gateway opens from the square on to a fine garden containing a tank.

From the maidan access is gained to Kerim Khan's bazaar, also known as the Bazaar-i-Vakil. It is the finest in Iran, and consists of a covered avenue built of yellow bricks and arched at the top. It is about five hundred yards long by one hundred and twenty yards broad, a rotunda or circular domed place marking the point of intersection, where are a cistern and a platform above it, where the merchants congregate. It has numerous skylights, which with its doors and windows admit sufficient light and air, while the sun and rain are completely excluded. This bazaar is allotted to the different traders of the city, all of whom have their assigned quarters, and is well supplied with goods imported from India, Constantinople, Russia and Germany. European tinned goods and fruits of all sorts are found in abundance. From the bazaars, gateways lead into extensive caravanserais. Excellent silver carving work is done in the bazaar, and amongst other things

for which Shiraz is famous are the enamelled bowls and stems of kalians ; also khatun-bandi, a species of mosaic work in wood, brass, silver, ivory and stained bone, small fragments of which are fixed in a bed of glue, and then planed smooth, the strips being fitted together on the sides and lids of boxes. For the antique collector, Shiraz is a disappointment.

Shiraz is known also as Dar-el-Ilm or Abode of Science. There are about fifty mosques in the place, the oldest of which is the Masjid-i-Jama, built in A.D. 875 by the Sefavid dynast Amr bin Leith, the brother and successor of Yakub bin Leith. In the centre of the main court is a small square stone building, supposed to be a copy of the Kaaba at Mecca, and having circular towers at the corners, giving in blue Cufic inscriptions round their summits, the date A.D. 1450. This building is known as the Khuda Khaneh or House of God. In the wall of the main building is inserted a block of porphyry which is looked upon as a sacred stone.

The Masjid-i-Nau or New Mosque is a large edifice, and consists of a flat-roofed cloister round its court, and is said to have been originally the palace of the Atabegs ; one of the princes, Ali bin Sayed ibn Zangi, in A.D. 1226 reconstructed it out of his own palace, and converted it into a mosque. His son was ill, and he consulted the Mullahs, who advised him to devote to the service of God, his most valued possession. Having done that, his son was restored to health. This mosque is the largest throughout Iran.

In the same square and not far from the Ark, is the largest of the domes of Shiraz, the blue faience traced dome of Shah Chiragh, whose cupola has been compared with the head of some giant asparagus. It contains the tomb of one of the sons of the Imam Musa, behind a silver grating. Other tombs are those of Sayed Mir Ahmed in a good state of preservation, and of Sayed Allah-ed-din Hussein, another son of the Imam Musa.

Of the more modern mosques of Shiraz is the Masjid-i-Khan built by Kerim Khan Zend. It was left unfinished at his death, and was never completed. There is a Madrasseh also, designated by his name, while another Madrasseh, known as the Madrasseh-i-Baba Khan in the vegetable market is now in ruins. In the decoration of Kerim Khan's mosques and buildings, bunches of roses, of flowers, and bright colours are very largely employed.

One of the principal caravanserais is the Caravanserai-i-Gumruk, chiefly inhabited by Zoroastrian merchants. Kerim Khan erected three public baths.

The houses of Shiraz are small, and the streets mostly narrow and filthy. The best constructed modern building is that occupied by the Indo-European Telegraph Department,¹ close to the British Consulate. It was formerly a palace, and has a fine courtyard of stone, with hallways and roomy chambers.

It is not for its buildings that Shiraz is renowned, but for its moss-roses and its nightingales, of which there are plenty there : for its vintage, its gardens, and for its being the birthplace of the poets Saadi and Hafiz.

As regards its vintage, there are two varieties, a red and a white one, which are stored in jars, and sold in glass bottles of curious shape locally manufactured. There is a curious story about the origin of wine which may be mentioned here. Jamshed, the fourth King of the Peshdadian dynasty, was the first who discovered wine. He was immoderately fond of grapes, and desired to preserve some, which were placed in a large vessel and lodged in a vault for future use. When the vessel was opened the grapes had

¹ The I. E. T. D. has been abolished now.

fermented and their juice in this state was so acid that the King believed it must be poisonous. He had some vessels filled with it and 'poison' written upon each. These were placed in his room. It happened that one of his favourite wives suffered from constant headaches. The pain distracted her so much that she desired death. Observing a vessel with 'poison' written on it, she took it and swallowed its contents. The wine, for such it had become, overpowered her, and she fell in a sound sleep and awoke much refreshed. Delighted with the remedy, she repeated the performance so often that the 'poison' was all finished. The King discovered this and forced his wife to tell the truth. A further quantity of wine was made, and Jamshed and his court drank of the new beverage. From the circumstances that led to its discovery, it is even now known in Iran by the name of *Zahar-i-Khoosh* or *The Delightful Poison*.

Shiraz has always been renowned for its gardens and its rose bowers. From the road a square or oblong enclosure is visible, enclosed by a high mud wall from the top of which appears a dense bouquet of trees. The interior is planted with trees, cypresses, chenars, pines, willows, etc., down the sides of long alleys. Water courses along in channels, or is conducted into tanks. Some of these gardens rise in terraces to a pavilion at the summit, and the latter are reflected in a pool below. But as a rule there are no neat walks and no flower-beds. The walks are usually in straight lines with brick and tile borders. Occasionally fountains and cascades falling over stone slabs are seen.

On the Kazerun road is the *Bagh-i-Gulsan*, a most extensive garden planted with all kinds of fruit trees and cypresses, with a water tank. Right in the middle of the garden is a house that has been recently built.

The most northerly garden, about one and a half miles from the city, is that known as the *Bagh-i-Takht*. A palace was first built on this site by one of the Salghur Atabegs named *Karajeh*, and was named *Takht-i-Karajeh* after him. Seven hundred years afterwards, *Agha Mohammed Khan* commenced building a palace on the same site, but the building was completed by *Feth Ali Shah*, when Governor of Fars. It stood upon the hill-side north-west of the city, and terrace rose above terrace, there being seven terraces in all, faced with tiles, and a long tank called the *Daricheh* or *Little Sea*, at the bottom, and a two-storeyed pavilion at the summit. Fountains and streams poured their water in cascades over slabs of marble, into reservoirs of stone. The walls were bordered with cypress and orange trees. It can hardly be called a garden now, for the whole is in a state of utter ruin. The walls around the enclosure, and leading up the terraces, are crumbling down, the tiles have come off the walls, while the pavilion too is deserted and falling to pieces. I was informed that the present Shah, when he visited Shiraz in 1928, gave some money for the repair of the building.

On the right of the Isfahan road leading down into Shiraz is the *Bagh-i-Nau* or *New Garden*, which is now the property of the Imperial Bank of Iran, the Manager residing therein.

The main road into Shiraz from the *Allahu Akbar Gate* is lined on either side with gardens, two of which on the east, the *Chihil Tan* (*Forty Bodies*) so called from forty derwishes who were there interred and the *Haft Tan* (*Seven Bodies*) built by *Kerim Khan* over the remains of seven holy persons as well as of *Sultan Shuja*, one of the old princes of Fars, are a resort for derwishes.

On the other side of the Isfahan road and a little above the *Hafizieh* is the *Jehan Numeh*, which was known as the *Bagh-i-Vakil* at the time of

Kerim Khan, but changed its name under Feth Ali, who built a summer-house there. It occupies a walled enclosure about two hundred yards square, but contains little beyond cypresses. On the 5th October 1821, C. T. Rich, British Resident at Baghdad and the explorer of Kurdistan, died there of cholera, and was buried in the garden.

Higher up on the same side of the road is the Dilkusha or Heart's Delight, laid out by one Haji Ibrahim when Kalanter, and is irrigated by a stream that flows down from the Sadieh, a little above. The garden is in an excellent state of repair, and its alleys, trees and tanks in good condition. It is well laid out. It is difficult to say which is the prettier of the two—Dilkusha or the Bagh-i-Gulsan.

Right down in the city, close to the Hotel Fars and opposite the Grand Hotel, is the newly made Bagh-i-Mili, running towards the British Consulate. It is a public garden, with roadways on either side for cars, and to the outside of the roadways are footpaths. There is a fountain in the middle. At sun-down when their work is over, the inhabitants of Shiraz come to this garden, and sit and talk to each other. Further down in the same street is the British Consulate.

The two chief objects of interest in the city are the graves of the poets Saadi and Hafiz.

Sheikh Malaas-ud-din, surnamed Saadi, was born in Shiraz about A.D. 1181 or 1184 and died in A.D. 1291. He had a very eventful life. He travelled in India, Africa, and Asia Minor, and had made more than a dozen pilgrimages to Mecca. He was taken prisoner by the Crusaders in Tripoli, made a slave, and set to digging in the trenches. A merchant of Aleppo took compassion on him, ransomed him for ten dinars, and later gave him his daughter in marriage for a hundred dinars. The wife was bad-tempered, so it was not a happy marriage. One day she lost her temper, and reviling him, said, "Art thou not the slave whom my father bought for ten dinars?" "Yes," replied Saadi, "he ransomed me for ten dinars, and sold me to you for a hundred." He then added in verse (the verse is now in the "Gulistan"):

" I've heard that a man of high degree,
From a wolf's teeth and claws, a lamb set free.
That night, its throat he severed with a knife,
When thus complained the lamb's departing life :
'Thou from the wolf didst save me then ; but now
Too plainly I perceive the wolf art thou.' "

The two chief works for which he is so well known are the " Gulistan " (Rose Garden), and the " Bostan."

His tomb lies under the mountains in a hollow of the plain about one and a half miles from the town in a north-easterly direction, and is called the Sadieh. The tomb is an enclosed garden full of poplars, cypresses and rose bushes. The building in which the sepulchre is enclosed is a two-storeyed one, containing some small rooms in the centre, with an arched diwan on either side, in one of which is the sarcophagus of this great poet. The chamber in which is the sarcophagus is entered through a massive door. The room is unpretentious, the walls plain and whitewashed, but there is a beautiful Iranian rug on the floor. All round the sarcophagus, and enclosing it is a tall brass lattice or screen. The sarcophagus is an oblong chest of stone, and chiselled on the stone are Arabic inscriptions about the immu-

tability of God, and also verses from Saadi's poems. Here also is kept a manuscript of Saadi's poems and his photograph.

Behind and to the north of the garden is a descent by a long flight of steps to a subterranean well, containing fish that were regarded as sacred to Saadi, the water proceeding from a *kanat* that subsequently irrigates the garden of Dilkhusa. The passage ends in a tiny rock chamber. From the north side a spring gushes forth and forms a pool into which there lead some stone steps. The water from the pool disappears into the rock opposite.

In the hills above the Sadieh and to the east of the Allahu Akbar Gate, is a large fissure or channel leading to an arched passage cut in the rock. It is known as the *Gahwarch-i-Div* (or the Demon's Cradle). A little to the east on the summit of a peak are the remains of a castle called the *Kaleh-i-Bandar* (Bandar's Fortress) and is supposed to be the ruins of a Sassanian castle. Here are two wells whose shafts are hewn to an immense depth. The largest, called *Chah Ali Bunder*, is of unknown depth. It is a great oblong chasm, and down its unfathomable depths, until recently, used to be thrown the faithless wives of Shiraz. The third well is known as the *Chah-i-Murtaza Ali*, a pool at the bottom of a series of steps surmounted by a building. It is visited by pilgrims who regard its waters as sacred. It is supposed to occupy the site of an old fire-temple, and it is said that the well sprang up as a miracle to quench the Zoroastrian fires, when the religion of Mohammed came into Iran.

Close to the *Chihil Tan*, and the *Haft Tan*, on the outskirts of the northern suburbs of the city, in a cemetery crowded with graves is the tomb of Hafiz, the enclosure being known as the *Hafizieh*. His name was Mohammed Shems-ed-din, and he was born in the early part of the fourteenth century and died in A.D. 1388. The place consists of a graveyard and a garden separated by a summer-house. The copy of the poet's work that was once chained to the tomb was carried off by Ashraf the Afghan. Nadir Shah repaired the tomb, but the original marble slab on which a cypress was said to have been sculpted was taken away by Kerim Khan, who built it into the tank of the *Jehan Numah*, and replaced it by the present sarcophagus. The tomb is near a tank and made of yellow marble, and surmounted by an iron railing at the corners of which fly iron flags. It is well kept. The marble slab is carved with the poet's verses, and at the top is an Arabic inscription, dealing with the eternal nature of God. At the bottom is carved the date of the poet's death, A.H. 791. The whole area is shaded by poplars, cypresses and maples, and there are also other buildings in the enclosure which give shelter to priests and pilgrims and derwishes.

Love and wine were the chief themes of Hafiz's poems, and here he had set himself against the recognized religion of his day. His scorn of the outward semblances of piety, brought on him the censure, and almost the excommunication of the priests. When he died, the Mullahs refused to give his body the last rites of a true Mahomedan. Fortunately he had many friends, and a big controversy arose, and eventually it was resolved that lots should be drawn from the poet's own work to decide whether he should be given proper burial or not. A number of his verses were taken out at random, and a small child was selected to draw one of these out of an urn. This was the passage to which fate directed the hand of the child:—

“ Forbear thou not to shed a tear,
Compassionate on Hafiz's bier,
For know that though now deeply 'mersed in sin,
To Paradise he yet shall enter in.” (Ode 60 : 7.)

It was a favourable omen. His body got proper burial, and the place is a shrine for pilgrims from far and near, who consider it an honour to be buried by his side.

Just outside the tomb of Hafiz, a man generally comes up to the traveller with a cup of tea, telling him that it is made from the "Ab-i-Rukni" (The "Water of the Ruknabad," immortalised by Hafiz), and that it is "khailay shireen" (very sweet). Of course, it is "khailay shireen" because he has put plenty of sugar in the tea to make it "shireen."

Not far off from the tomb of Hafiz is a tiny little stream, running down the hill, so insignificant that unless it is pointed out to him, the traveller is apt to pass it by without noticing it. This is the famous Ruknabad, so immortalised by Hafiz in the following lines :—

"Still be thou blest of Him that gave
Thy stream, sweet Ruknabad, whose wave
Can every human ill assuage,
And life prolong to Khizr's age."

(High up in the hill behind the city is a well known as the Well of Baba Kuhi, where once lived an old hermit who gave his name to the spot.)

The altitude of Shiraz is 5,100 feet above sea-level. The climate is dry, but intermittent fever is very rife, and Europeans are afflicted with insomnia and irritability. The population of Shiraz is somewhere about 60,000, of whom about fifty are Zoroastrians. The Zoroastrians, unfortunately here have no High Priest, and no fire-temple, and no Tower of Silence. They bury the body in the earth, and put stones over it. They possess no manuscripts of the Avesta either. They are honest and hard-working and well respected by everybody. Many of them, however, are Bahis.

In the neighbourhood of Shiraz are some Achæmenian and Sassanian ruins, but they cannot be got at by car.

- (1) On a hill four miles to the south-east, known as Takht-i-Abu Nasr, are remains of three portals of stone with human figures chiselled in relief on the inner side of the jambs. The stones have, however, been upset.
- (2) Near the Meherlu Lake are three tablets sculpted in the rock above a pool. They are called, by Binning, Naksh-i-Burmedillek from the name of the pool.

Seven miles in a south-easterly direction is a swamp called Karabagh where excellent shooting can be obtained. The marsh lies at the upper end of a valley, the lower extremity of which is filled by the salt lake of Meharlu, into which flows the stream that irrigates the plain of Shiraz. Along the southern shore runs the caravan track to Darab.

Further to the north-east, on the Shiraz-Kerman road, is the Daria-i-Niriz, the second largest lake in Iran, which is divided into two lakes by a projecting island. Though its chief confluent is the Bund Amir, its waters are extremely salt, and in dry seasons it has a thick saline incrustation.

The old road from Persepolis to Shiraz went via the Bund Amir. Ten miles down after the confluence of the Kur with the Pulvar, the united stream is crossed by a dam, upon which stands a bridge of thirteen arches,

one hundred and twenty yards in length, the work of Asad-ed-Dowleh of the Dilemi dynasty in A.D. 970. This lower course of the river has received the name of the Bund Amir (i.e., Dyke of the Amir) or "Bendemeer" of Moore ("Lalla Rookh"). In the time of Asad-ed-Dowleh, the banks of the river were adorned at various places with parks and palaces and cascades which have vanished long ago. The lines of the poet Moore will always be remembered :—

1. "There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long ;
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.
The bower and its music I never forget,
But oft when alone in the bloom of the year,
I think—is the nightingale singing there yet ?
Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemeer ?

 2. No ! the roses soon wither'd that hung o'er the wave ;
But some blossoms were gather'd, while freshly they shone,
And a dew was distilled from their flowers, that gave
All the fragrance of summer, when summer was gone.
Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
An essence that breathes of it many a year ;
Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to my eyes,
Is that bower on the banks of the calm Bendemeer."
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CHAPTER XLIII

FROM SHIRAZ TO BUSHIRE

GOING from Shiraz to Bushire, the traveller descends from the Great Iranian plateau, from a mean height of 4,000 to 6,000 feet, to the level of the sea. In the course of this, he has just to climb to a height of 7,400 feet, and then make a descent by a series of rocky passes, which have been compared to ladders. The difference of climate too is remarkable. With snow on the hills, and on the ground at Shiraz and over the rocky kotals, it is like a summer's day in Kazeroun and Bushire.

Leaving Shiraz, past the Bagh-i-Mili, the road makes for the westerly corner of the Shiraz Valley, passing through small villages on the way. At a distance of eight miles the caravanserai, called the Chenar-i-Rahdar, is crossed. Here we reach the foot-hills and the ascent begins. A steady ascent is encountered, which leads into an upland valley, watered by the Kara Aghach, with a wide stony bed. The river takes a circuitous route of three hundred miles, and falls into the sea by a creek known as the Khor Ziarat. It is the Sitakus of the ancients. The road follows its left bank for two miles through hilly country. In the distance is the caravanserai of Khan-i-Zinian, which was built by the Mushir-el-Mulk, who was Vizier or Minister to the then Governor of Fars. It was in this old caravanserai in 1860 that M. Minutoli, Prussian Minister to the Court of Teheran, died. It was on this stretch of road that in 1871 Corporal Collins, R.E., one of the original staff of the Telegraph Department, while travelling with his wife and attendants was attacked by a band of robbers and killed, but not before he had killed two or three of the bandits with his own hand. The remainder were caught by the Governor who buried them alive in pillars of mud. Three miles further on, the river is crossed by a bridge of several arches. After following up the valley for another three miles, it climbs the crest of a ridge known as the Sineh Safid. At the top of the pass is a ruined tower where there was a former toll-house. From the top, the symmetrical plain of Dasht-i-Arjan (or Plain of the Wild Almond) is visible. In the winter it is a pretty sight when it is entirely covered with snow. The plain is mountain locked, and in the wet season the hollow is filled with a lake. Malcolm says: "This small but delightful valley is encircled by mountains, down whose rugged sides a hundred rills contribute their waters to form the lake in its centre. The beauty of these streams, some of which fall in a succession of cascades from hills covered with vines; the lake itself in whose clear bosom is reflected the image of the mountains by which it is overhung; the rich fields on its margin; and the roses, hyacinths and almost every species of flower that grow in wild luxuriance on its borders, made us gaze in admiration on this charming scene."

The village is clustered against the base of the northern hills. On the far side of the valley is the Kotal-i-Pir-i-Zan (the Pass of the Old Woman), the first of these mountain passes which have to be crossed on the road to Bushire. The hills round this plain used to abound with wild animals, wild-boar, hyaenas, wolves, jackals and antelopes, and not so long ago the maneless lion of Southern Iran too was found here. At the present day, there are very few wild animals to be found.

Notwithstanding the prettiness of Dasht-i-Arjan, the place is distinctly unhealthy. Intermittent fever is always prevalent, and the majority of people have got enlarged spleens and livers.

Leaving Dasht-i-Arjan, a little stream issuing from the base of the rock is crossed. Inside a small domed building, close by, is a slab bearing the imprint of the hoofs of Ali's horse. In the face of the rock, the cave is regarded as a sacred place, and contains tin sconces for votive tapers. A ruined caravanserai is passed in the distance, and at the southern extremity of the marsh, the ascent of the mountain-pass is commenced. The Pass of the Old Woman is six miles long, and covered with heavy snow in winter. The pass is free from stones, and on account of the clayey nature of the soil, gets very slippery in rainy weather, and skid chains on cars are absolutely essential. The ascent of the Kotal-i-Pir-i-Zan from the Dasht-i-Arjan side is steep and precipitous, but is soon over. At the bottom, and at the summit of the pass are two chae-khanehs, where tea can be obtained. The descent is infinitely worse, especially with snow on the ground. It is extremely steep, with numerous twists and turns and hair-pin bends that require great skill in driving. From the lake of Dasht-i-Arjan to the top of the pass where the descent begins, which is 7,400 feet above the sea, is perhaps two miles. From the summit is obtained a magnificent view of ridge succeeding ridge in oblique parallels, towards the Dashtistan, or Land of Plains, that is succeeded by the gulf. The total descent is over 3,000 feet within a distance of four or five miles. About half-way down the pass on a platform of rock is situated the caravanserai of Mian Kotal (Mid Pass). From here can be seen the Abdin Plain, or the Dasht-i-Barm, a valley five miles long by one or two in width thickly sown with dwarf oaks.

After the descent of the pass, the Abdin Plain is traversed from end to end, and at the end of the valley the road turns sharply to the left, makes a slight ascent, and then at the crest of the ridge is a steep descent, known as the Kotal-i-Dukhtar or Pass of the Maiden. This pass was originally made by the mother of Imam Quli Khan, Viceroy of Fars under Shah Abbas, when it was called Kotal-i-Ushanak. At the end of the eighteenth century it was reconstructed by a merchant, Haji Mohammed Hussein of Bushire. About 1820 it was repaired by Kelb Ali Khan, Governor of Kazeroun. It was again repaired in 1834, by the mother of Timur Mirza, and then in 1870 by Mushir-ul-Mulk, Vizier of Fars, and lastly in 1928. The Kotal-i-Dukhtar is shorter than the Kotal-i-Pir-i-Zan, but its steepest part is decidedly steeper. There is a zigzag descent of seven hundred feet. The road is narrow, but has been buttressed up, and paved with huge boulders. Landslides are frequent. From the summit of the pass, the plain of Kazeroun can be seen bounded at the south-east extremity by the Daria-i-Perishum or Lake Famur.

At the foot of the pass, the track turns sharply round a projecting angle of rock. Close by, at the back of a ruined enclosure, which was formerly the court of a rest-house built here, is a degenerate sculptured bas-relief, a miserable imitation of the Sassanian sculpture, the sort of vanity commonly shown by the Kajar princes.

It is a relief of Timur Mirza, one of the Iranian princes who came as a refugee to London in 1837 after the unsuccessful rebellion of his father Hussein Ali Mirza, a son of Feth Ali Shah, and Governor-General of Fars. This particular Timur was Governor of Kazeroun, and on this rock he is seen with a tame lion, a pipe-bearer, some attendants, and a hawk, the names of the attendants being carved in Persian. While the Sassanian princes loved the chase, and killed wild lions, the Kajar princes evidently delighted in having tame lions by their side. The figures, more than life-size, were originally painted and gilded. The sculpture was defaced by the nomad tribes. Every passing wayfarer had his share in the defacement too.

From the foot of the Kotal-i-Dukhtar the track goes through the plain of Kazeroun, to the town of the same name, eight miles away. Here the difference in temperature is very marked. Presently Kazeroun with its date palms appears in view, so different to anything so far seen in Iran. It is a pretty spot, with a healthy climate, rich in water and famous for its oranges and its mules. Most of the muleteers of the Bushire-Shiraz road come from Kazeroun. The oranges of Kazeroun are bitter and not sweet. In addition, Kazeroun is famous for its school of wrestlers, and for a kind of rough shoe of cotton and hide. A good deal of opium and tobacco is also cultivated in the valley which is also irrigated by kanats. Outside the city is a shady garden called the Bagh-i-Nazar. The modern town was dismantled of its fortifications by Jaafar Khan Zend.

Kazeroun is seventy miles south of Shiraz, and about one hundred and eight miles north of Bushire. It is situated in a valley thirty miles long by eight miles broad, bounded on the south-east by a lake. On the south side is the Kuh-i-Mahar, a very high precipitous range of limestone mountains. Most of the houses are built of stone and mortar. Antiquities are found on the green hills behind, where there are some traces of an old fort and an empty cistern which supplied the fort with water. Vines are cultivated on the slopes of the neighbouring mountains. Water-supply is abundant, and the water is excellent.

Before visiting the ruins of Shapur, it is advisable to arrange with the Reis-i-Amniyeh for the supply of horses. Cars run right up to the ruins, but the river has to be forded, and a steep ascent made to the cave, and horses are very useful. One whole day is required for a complete examination of the ruins of Shapur, which will be described in the next chapter.

From Kazeroun the Bushire road goes on to Diriz through the plain. Just beyond Diriz a branch road goes off Shapur. The Bushire road crosses a low ridge of hills and then broken ground, and enters a winding gorge, fifteen miles from Kazeroun, known as the Tang-i-Turkan. The road descends a defile in the bed of a torrent, and is narrow. The Tang-i-Turkan opens on to the plain of Kamarij, at the further end of which is the village of Kamarij with a few date palms. Kamarij is shut in by hills about eight hundred feet high, and boasts of a fort. It is a small village of five hundred inhabitants, eighty-seven miles north of Bushire. The houses are flat-roofed and built of stone. Water is good. Just beyond Kamarij village are two kotali—the old Kamarij Kotal, not used by motors, and the new winding Rudak Kotal, which is on the Shiraz-Bushire motor track.

The old Kamarij Kotal was the third of the rocky kotali. At the foot of the pass is a conformation of long flat-topped hills. It is the steepest of the passes, there being a sheer drop of 1,200 feet in less than a mile. The road goes high above a torrent bed. Near to the top of the pass is a tea-house. The scenery here is wild and grand, the mountains being split by mighty fissures, with perpendicular stratification, and having on either sides streaks of many-coloured marls.

It was on the worst part of this descent on the old road, known as the Kamar or Ledge of Asad Khan, that in 1752, Asad Khan who was one of the claimants of the throne after the death of Nadir Shah was attacked by Kerim Khan Zend, acting upon the advice of Rustam Sultan, Chief of Khisht. The soldiers of Kerim Khan were posted in the valley below while the followers of Rustam Sultan were hidden among the crags above. Asad Khan was completely trapped. He himself escaped but was pardoned by Kerim Khan, and even elevated to favour.

The new Rudak Kotal is not so steep, and is easy going for motors. After the descent the road strikes the left bank of the Shapur River, and then goes across the plain of Khisht to the hamlet of Konar Takhteh, situated midway down the valley.

For three and a half miles from Konar Takhteh the road lies across the plain to the south, and then commences the short ascent of the Kotal-i-Malu or the Cursed Pass, the last pass between Shiraz and the sea. The first part is slightly steep, but in the descent there is only a drop of 1,000 feet in three miles. At the top of the pass is a tower, and a chai-khaneh or tea-house.

After the descent, which is eight miles north of the village of Daliki, the road strikes the river of that name which rises in the mountains of Fars, runs past the village of Daliki, and having reached the plains joins the Shapur River, the two flowing into the gulf to the north of Bushire under the name of the Rud-i-Shapur. The road runs along the right bank of the river, passes a ruined bridge, and then crosses it by a stone bridge of six arches, terminating in a causeway on the other side. A tower guards the north entrance to the bridge. The road follows the river down a gorge for about two miles further, then enters a ravine, and after a steep ascent descends into the plain to Daliki.

Daliki is four hundred feet above sea-level, and is only thirteen miles from Borasjun. It is a small village of forty houses and two mosques surrounded all round except on the north-east by date plantations, and inhabited by Arabs. The salt hills at the foot of which the village stands, rise to a considerable height, and are remarkable in shape, and have curious stratifications. The colours vary, and are red, grey, brown, white, blue and green. Ibex are found in the hills.

Daliki is celebrated for its naphtha springs; sulphur streams flow across the road, and convert the plain into a sort of a marsh, smelling of sulphuretted hydrogen. A little below, in the plain south of Daliki, is a bitumen pit from which the local people have been collecting that substance, as a prescription for the sore backs of camels, and for the smearing of boat and roof timbers.

The climate of Daliki is hot, damp and sultry, and when the winds come from the direction of the sulphur wells, the smell is most objectionable. Good drinking water can be got from the stream, but the caravanserais wells are brackish and undrinkable.

After leaving the village, sulphur streams have to be crossed, and the road goes south, over undulating ground, and reaches the village of Borasjun, twenty-eight miles north-east of Bushire. The town stands at an elevation of two hundred and fifty feet and is surrounded by extensive date groves. There is a very fine stone-built caravanserai here, with loop-holed walls. It contains rooms and stables opening out of the central court, and also *bala khanehs*, and sleeping places for the rich. An excellent view can be had from the top of the caravanserai. In 1906 it was utilized by an Iranian military detachment. The town contains several religious shrines.

The population of Borasjun is about 6,000 inhabitants, the people being mostly cultivators. The inhabitants are well known for boiling and eating locusts in the manner of shrimps. Good drinking water can be obtained from the wells. The Indo-European Telegraph Department used to have a rest-house here.¹

Six miles south of Borasjun is the hamlet of Kooshab, where in February 1857, the Iranians made a night attack upon the British force under Sir J.

¹ This is non-existent now as the Indo-European Telegraph Department has been abolished.

Outram. The British force which had landed in December and captured Bushire, advanced to Borasjun. The Iranians under the Shuja-ul-Mulk, who were encamped here, bolted, leaving their equipment and ammunition to the British. Outram blew up the magazine, and prepared to march back to Bushire. In the night the Iranian cavalry attacked the column, while the infantry were drawn up at Kooshab. Before morning, they were in full flight.

The next village passed is Ahmadi, at an elevation of seventy feet. Here is a caravanserai for travellers, and there is accommodation for 2,000 travellers. The villagers cultivate wheat, barley and dates. The water, however, is brackish, and unpleasant to the taste.

From Ahmadi the road goes straight to Bushire.

Bushire

Bushire or Abu Shehr was originally a small fishing village, and was later selected by Nadir Shah, as his southern port, and the place where he hoped to make a dockyard for his navy. Later on, the East India Company received firmans from Kerim Khan Zend conferring trading privileges upon them, and as a result transferred their factory to Bushire. To-day Bushire is an important seaport. The town is situated at the northern extremity of a peninsula, upon a ledge of sandy conglomerate stone which projects above the sea-level. The peninsula is identified with the Mesambria of Arrian, where the fleet of Nearchus cast anchor and found plantations and gardens.

Formerly the population of Bushire was entirely Arab ruled by a Sheikh who had emigrated from Oman in the seventeenth century, but now most of the population of 15,000 inhabitants is of a mixed Arab and Iranian descent.

The British Residency is on the western front of Bushire facing the open sea, as also the principal European residences or places of business. The houses of the Iranians have badgirs or wind towers to admit the air. The bazaars are extensive, but narrow and confined. On the southern side, Bushire was formerly fortified by a high wall, with bastions and towers. Old Portuguese guns got from Reshire or Ormuzd were planted outside the gates. The wall was rebuilt by Mohammed Shah in 1838, as a protection against the English, but it is in ruins now.

Though Bushire is the main port of Iran, its anchorage is in an open roadstead about three miles from the shore. Cargo has to be embarked and disembarked in tenders. The inner bay on the western side was originally used as a harbour, but a bar has formed opposite its entrance, and boats with a big draught cannot pass.

The climate of Bushire is unhealthy. The heat is damp, and the average rainfall is about twelve inches in the year. The prevailing winds are the south-east, and the north-west or the Shimal. The latter lasts about three days, and blows about nine months, especially in June and July, when it is known as the Forty Days' Wind.

The water of Bushire is bad. The houses have wells, but the water is bitter. Good drinking water has to be brought in mashks from outside the city.

About six miles to the south of the town are the ruins of the old Portuguese fort of Reshire, the earliest settlement on the peninsula of Mesambria.

In the mounds here have been found bricks with cuneiform characters, and other remains of considerable antiquity, collection of stone and earthenware vases sealed up with earthenware lids, and lined with a coating of bitumen, containing human skulls and bones. Ouseley (Vol. I, p. 217) thinks that they are the remains of Zoroastrians after the body had perished by exposure. Old sculptured tombstones of the Arab period have also been found.

The Portuguese built a fort at Reshire in the sixteenth century, but were turned out by the Iranians in A. D. 1622, after the capture of Ormuzd. The fort was repaired in 1856, and occupied by the Iranian troops. It figured in the fight of 1857, when it made an ineffectual resistance against the British. The fort is now in ruins, but the remains of the old ditch can still be seen.

To return to our original starting-place at Duzdap, and see Yezd on the way, it is necessary to retrace our steps from Bushire to Shiraz, past the ruins of Persepolis to Dehbid, and then proceed to Yezd. Visitors who wish to avoid Yezd and go direct to Kerman, can go from Shiraz via Niriz, one and a half days' journey, which will be described in another chapter. For the present I will attempt to give a description of the ruins of Shapur, near Kazeroun.

CHAPTER XLIV

RUINS OF SHAPUR

SEVEN miles south of Kazeroun, on the Bushire road is the little village of Diriz. Immediately after leaving Diriz the road to Shapur branches off from the main road to the right. It goes straight on to the gorge near the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar another seven miles further on, and then forks into two. The road to the right goes to the left bank of the Shapur River, and ends abruptly from where a turn to the right brings the traveller to the first and second sculptures. To see the other sculptures the visitor will have to return by car to the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar, where the roads divide, and this time take the left-hand road, and ford the Shapur River. At most times of the year a car can ford the river. Stopping the car on the other bank, the inscriptions have to be visited on foot, and horses, if previously arranged, taken to go to the cave.

The man who built this city of Shapur was Shapur I (A.D. 241-272), a great King, the second of the Sassanian monarchs. He was the King by whose orders Valerian's bridge at Shuster was made, his was the city between Dizful and Shuster whose ruins are now known as the Jund-i-Shapur. Some say the bridge of Dizful is attributed to him; at Naksh-i-Rustam and Naksh-i-Rajab are the bas-reliefs that record his victories and his splendour. He was the conqueror of Valerian. Here is the royal city which he founded, and where are some more of his bas-reliefs. It was over the gates of this city that the skin of Mani, the founder of the Manichean heresy, was stuffed, and set up on high, after he had been put to death by Varahran I (A.D. 272-275). When the Arabs conquered Iran, the sculptures at Shapur were mutilated, and the city destroyed. The northern cliff, a great sloping face of rock, opens abruptly revealing a gorge about a hundred yards in width, cloven right through it from top to bottom. Down this gorge, in a stony bed, flows the Shapur River, between lofty banks, with a dense growth of reeds, and grasses on either bank. The gorge known as the Tang-i-Chakan, widens at its further end to four hundred yards, and then opens into a valley, round which the mountains are arranged in a sort of amphitheatre.

In the jaws of this gorge is a spur from the south-east cliff, a solitary rock, the sides of which are covered with remains of old walls, and on whose summit are the remains of a castle. This is the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar, and the ruins command the mouth of the gorge.

The sculptures at Shapur are six in number, the first two on the left bank of the river.

First Tablet.—Shapur and Valerian.—This tablet has been wilfully mutilated. The top part of it has been completely destroyed. The lower part shows the legs of two horses, confronting each other. Below the feet of the horse on the right-hand side is a prostrate figure, lying with his face turned outwards, and resting on his right hand, his left arm outstretched along his side. In front of the horse is a kneeling figure in Roman costume, with outstretched suppliant arm, and a face of mute appeal, very like the one at Naksh-i-Rustam. The features of the suppliant too have been obliterated. The figure on horseback is Shapur, the suppliant is Valerian, the Roman Emperor.

Second Tablet.—Shapur, Valerian and Cyriadis.—About a few yards further on, is the second tablet showing the investiture of Cyriadis,

the obscure Syrian of Antioch, in the presence of the captive Valerian. The sculptures here are not defaced, and have an overhanging canopy of rock. The length of the tablet is forty-one feet, and height twenty feet. It is divided into three portions:—In the centre, on a tablet twelve feet one inch long by eight feet two inches high is the King on horseback, with his turretted crown and globe. He has long curly locks, and his beard is tied in a knot below the chin. From his head are the Sassanian fillets; upon his legs are the usual flowing Sassanian shulwars. A quiver hangs at his side. With his right hand he holds the right hand of a figure standing by the hind quarters of his horse, and wearing a Roman dress and a laurel wreath on his head, and fetters round his ankles. The horse tramples under foot a prostrate figure. Facing the King is a kneeling figure, also wearing the Roman dress and a laurel wreath, but having a sword by his side. In front of the horse's head is an inscription of five lines. Behind the kneeling figure are two individuals, one with a circular, the other with a conical head-piece.

Behind the King on the left-hand side of the relief are two tablets one above the other, with five horsemen in each following the King; on the right-hand side and facing the King are five tablets, three in the lower row and two above them, containing figures on foot, and warriors. These tablets are four feet eleven inches long, and nine feet ten inches high.

The men on horseback wear the Iranian dress, and their right arms are uplifted and their forefingers are pointed in an attitude of respect, as in the panels at the Naksh-i-Rustam. They are probably Shapur's bodyguard. The figures facing the King are mostly warriors carrying arms, and other objects. They are supposed to be figures of a vanquished army, or attendants of the royal court.

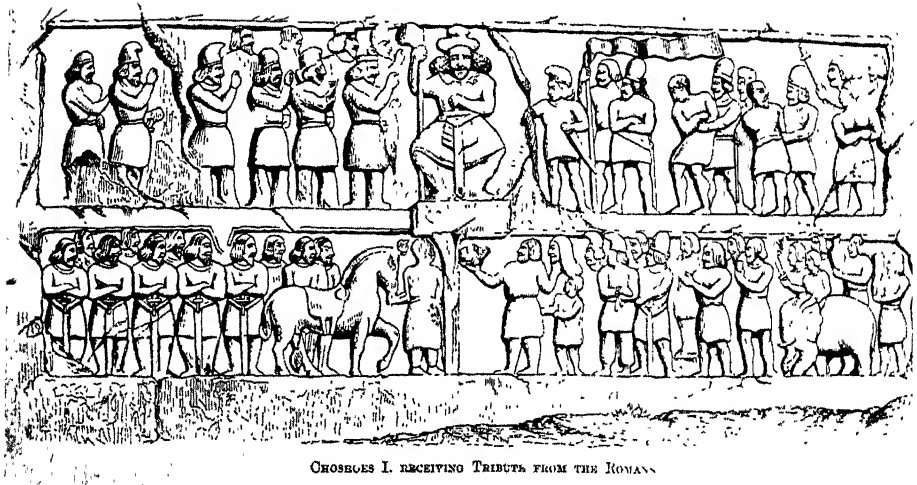
This tablet is carved in high relief, and the depth of the recess which it occupies is from one to five feet.

The inscriptions on the right bank of the river are situated at heights varying from twenty to fifty feet above the river-bed; and there is no roadway below them. There is an aqueduct of later and probably Arab origin, which has been scooped and tunnelled along the face of the natural rocks, undermining one of the inscriptions. The aqueduct was designed to convey the waters of a small spring in the interior of the valley to a mill which once existed in the Kazeroun plain. In the days when this aqueduct was used, the soil was banked up to the level of the ground. Messrs. Stolze and Andreas in 1877 removed the accumulations by digging and blasting, and laid bare all the sculptures. Three of the panels here are on the same level as the aqueduct, while the fourth is above it.

Third Tablet—Investiture of Cyriadis.— This tablet, instead of being square or oblong like the rest, is a semi-circular one more than thirty feet in length. It has four panelled rows of figures, the two lower rows being five and a half feet high, and the two upper, three feet high. Near the centre, or rather a little lower than the middle of the panel, is seen Shapur I on horseback, holding by the hand a figure clad in the Roman dress; he treads under foot a prostrate foe. This is the figure of Cyriadis about to be invested. The kneeling figure of Valerian in front of the King, has the same characteristics as before. Behind Valerian, a figure holds out a royal chaplet to the King. This figure is an attendant presenting to Shapur the wreath he is about to bestow on Cyriadis. A winged figure floats overhead, and presents an unrolled chaplet to the King. The figures behind the King in the four rows, are his mounted guards, each



FIFTH TABLE—ORMUZD AND NARSES.



CHOSROES I. RECEIVING TRIBUTE FROM THE ROMANS

with an uplifted finger of reverence. There are fifteen guards in the bottom row, and fourteen in the other three, making fifty-seven in all. The figures in front of the King are his prisoners, tribute-bearers, and attendants with trophies of victory, and carrying trays. In the lowest row is a two-horsed chariot, and a standard supposed to represent a captured Roman eagle, and attendants carrying trays; those in the last but one row, contain a double row of figures, of whom the front escort the captured war horse of Valerian, and an elephant; those behind hold up draperies in the path of the cortege. These figures are twenty-three in number. The two upper rows show attendants carrying offerings on their shoulders, and leading two lions or leopards.

The bottom of this panel has been completely eroded by the water in the aqueduct.

Fourth Tablet—Shapur and Captives.—This tablet has been defaced by the erosion of the water leaking from the aqueduct. The sculpture is about twenty-one feet long by twelve feet high. The King is on the left-hand side, wearing a winged helmet, from whose centre rises the globe. His hair is puffed and curled. The fillets stream behind his head and shoulders, and from his side hangs a quiver. His horse's tail is thickly plaited, and at his hind quarter hangs, by a chain, the pendant. The nose and mouth of the King have been obliterated by the groove due to the erosion of the water, and the horse too is damaged.

The captives advance towards the King. The first is a warrior wearing a skull-cap. His ringlets hang in a curled bush behind, and his arms are crossed above the hilt of his sword. Behind him are three other figures with a sort of handkerchief round their head, accompanying a horse. Behind them, and on a slightly higher level, are two camels with two attendants. One camel's head is very well preserved. The figures of the captives too have been damaged by the water. The whole scene represents one of the Sassanian sovereigns on horseback, probably Shapur, receiving the submission and offerings of captives. Many opinions have been given about this panel. Some say it is the Embassy that Shapur received from Odenathus, the husband of the famous Zenobia, and the Chief of Palmyra; others that it represents Shapur's capture of Nisibis on his first Roman campaign, while still others maintain that the panel represents the victory of Shapur over the Syrian King, Sitarun.

Fifth Tablet—Ormuzd and Narses.—The tablet is about eighteen feet high, and well preserved. The water channel has only cut into the hocks of the horses at the base of the tablet. Two figures on horseback approach each other. The figure on the left is that of Ormuzd, who wears the mural crown. He has bushy locks, and his beard is well trimmed. In his hand he holds out the royal circlet with the streamers. The figure to the right is that of the King, who holds out his right hand to receive the circlet. He wears the spiked crown of Narses with the globe rising above it. His hair is curled, and flows in ringlets, and his beard is knotted. A Pehlavi inscription in the right-hand corner contains these words:—

“This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the god Narses, King of Kings, Arian and non-Arian, of the race of the gods, the son of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the god, Shapur, King of Kings, Arian and non-Arian of the race of the gods, offspring of the god Artakshatr, King of Kings.”

Narses reigned from A.D. 292-301 when he abdicated.



THE FALLEN STATUE OF SHAPUR I.



THE CAVE AND THE FALLEN STATUE OF SHAPUR I (SHAPUR.)

Sixth Tablet.—Triumph of Chosroes—Hidden in a recess, and half of it shaded by a tree, this tablet consists of an oblong panel, thirty-four feet long divided in two rows of figures one above the other. Facing the spectator, and in the middle of the upper row is the King. He wears a double crown, his hair hanging down in puffs on either side. His legs are wide apart, his right hand is uplifted and grasps a standard, while his left hand rests on the hilt of his sword. On the left-hand side of the upper panel and hidden by the trees, are Iranian courtiers with uplifted fingers; in the panel below are a number of Iranian nobles following the saddled, but riderless steed of the monarch. In the upper row on the right-hand side, is a wounded prisoner, and a captive with his hands tied behind his back being led by Iranian attendants; in the bottom row, the first figure holds two decapitated heads in his hands. Behind him are a number of prisoners and attendants, among whom is a child in a suppliant attitude, and a boy riding.

The whole tablet shows a ruder style of art than the preceding ones. There is no inscription here, but because the King is standing full faced facing the spectator, he is presumed to be Chosroes I, or Anushirwan the Just. Rawlinson thinks that this tablet represents the triumph of Chosroes over the Romans, but there is no figure in the tablet that can be identified with a Roman.

Proceeding up the right bank of the river for a good two miles on foot or horseback, we come to a village, and here it is advisable to take a guide to the cave up the hill. Horses must be left behind at the village. The cave is situated high up in the face of the north-west cliff (on the left going towards it) of the inner valley of Shapur, a sheer scrap of rock, seven hundred feet towering above it. The ascent is long, steep and fatiguing and takes a solid climb of one hour at the very least, the last two hundred yards being worst of all. In front of the cavern is a great perpendicular mass of rock, over which it is difficult to scramble without assistance. While ascending that rock, it is advisable not to look down into the valley below. Its descent can be easily accomplished by means of a rope. The cave is well worth a visit.

After climbing this dangerous rock, a yawning mouth of a great big cavern fifty feet high and one hundred and forty feet broad, is seen in the rock. Facing the middle of the entrance, and about thirty feet inside stands a huge pedestal five feet high and ten feet in diameter, shaped from the solid rock. Upon it are standing the sandalled feet, and the stumps of the legs of the fallen image. The statue mutilated, and hurled from its site, has tumbled sideways, its left arm is broken short, its right arm has been broken at the shoulder, but the hand still rests upon the thigh. The face is mutilated, the nose broken off, and the upper part of the head and crown are buried in the soil. The statue was a monolith originally attached to the rock above and below, and carved out of a solid piece of rock. The height was over twenty feet. The length of the head is three feet three inches, while the breadth of the shoulders is eight feet two inches. The King wears the mural crown, and his hair comes out on either side in abundant curls; his moustache and beard are curled; there is a necklace round his throat; he wears a kind of jersey, and the usual shulwars or loose trousers. There is a sash round his right shoulder, and a cross band meeting it on the left. A knot of ribands is tied at his waist, and from his left side hung a sword. This is the colossal image of Shapur I, "the image of the Ormuzd-worshipper, Shapur, King of Kings. Arian and non-Arian, of the race of the gods, son of the God Artakshatr, King of Kings." This image too was worshipped as that of a god.

For the examination of the rest of the cavern candles are required.

Passing the statue, and at about a hundred yards from the entrance, is a small depression, where is situated an old tank. Fifty yards further on is a huge pit, from whose slopes branch numerous dark passages. The one on the left hand leads into a circular hall about fifty yards in diameter. The passage immediately ahead is a broad passage, in which are the remains of a smaller tank than the first, behind which the passage branches, but reunites again and leads into a small hall, at the far end of which two narrow passages run a shorter distance into the rock. Both lead to blind ends, the one on the left coming to a stop sooner than the one on the right.

Along the right-hand side of the pit, numerous passages branch off, which lead into a huge hall, sloping down to a depression, which may have been an underground lake. This hall, about three hundred to four hundred feet long, and one hundred and ten feet in height, after descending for fifty yards, rises again, and after continuing for some distance divides into numerous short branches.

The last passage on the right-hand side of the pit, does not lead into the hall, but ends in a chamber, whose roof is blackened by smoke, and in the centre of which is an irregular stone. The whole cave is a mass of stalactites, and in the great hall are some curious figures due to them.

The cave is damp, but the soil is soft and loose. The stalagmites have formed mushroom-like figures. In the bottom of the lake in the great hall are fragments of pottery, and bones. The galleries are all natural, and not the work of man. The tanks suggest that the cave must have been a human habitation once, perhaps the home of the priests whose duty it must have been to look after the statue.

Returning from there, an investigation of the Koleh-i-Dukhtar should be made. The fort stands on the extremity of the south-eastern rock wall of the gorge, and is now in ruins. Only a few walls, the remains of a few rooms, and two or three buttresses remain.

On the north-western side where the ascent should be made are found many pieces of enamel pottery. Down the cliff to the north-west are ramparts terminating in ruined towers.

To the south-east are the remains of two massive buttresses, the remains of a strong wall, a block of masonry, the entrance to which are stopped by debris. Here are also the ruins of tiers of fortifications, the ruins of which, together with a few dilapidated rooms cover the slopes. The two buttresses are very thick and have no windows. A great mass has become detached from the most southerly one.

At the foot of this portion of the fort, on the edge of the cliff is a curious stone altar, hollowed out, and large enough to contain the body of a man. It is about four feet high and eight feet long. The purpose it served is not known. Perhaps it was a grave. On the north-eastern side are other "graves" hollowed out of the rock. In some cases, there is at a corner a little hole leading to a cut channel in the stone for carrying off water. Besides these are many slightly raised "tables" carved out of the rock.

From the top of the fort a magnificent view can be got of the Vale of Kazeroun. The little winding paths and the watercourses wander through

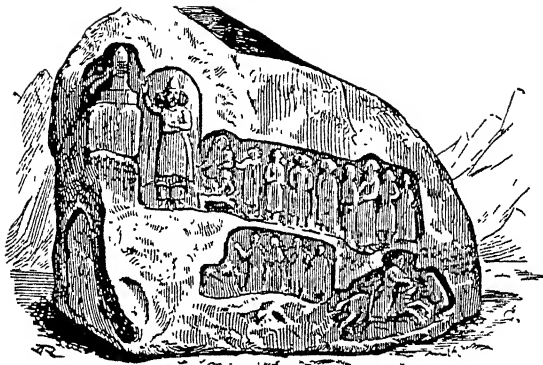
the landscape. Only two ruins catch the eye. One to the south seems to be the remains of an old fort: the other those of a large room or "bath," constructed of blocks of stone four feet by two feet by one foot. The north-western wall is almost entire. The level of the floor is sunk about twenty feet below the ground level. Behind the "bath," there is an open space with a mound of ruins in the centre. The ruined city is honeycombed with wells and kanats. Morier¹ has described some subterranean passages as well.

The Koleh-i-Dukhtar is on the south-east side of the gorge. On the north-west side of the gorge, straight to and opposite its sister fort, and guarding the portals of the gorge, stood the Koleh-i-Pisar, now in absolute ruins. All that remains is a mass of stones and fragments of rude pottery.

The following excursions can be made on horseback from Shapur:—

- (1) To the Mamaseni village of Nurabad, between Behbahan and Kazeroun. Here on the banks of a small river is a great Sassanian bas-relief representing a monarch and his courtiers. The plain is called the Sahara-i-Bahran, and the inscription, Naksh-i-Behram.
- (2) In the country of the Mamasenni Lurs, who pride themselves on their origin, claiming to have come from Seistan, and to have been directly descended from Rustam, and who are celebrated for their predatory and lawless habits, is situated the celebrated hill-fort of the Diz-i-Safid or the White Castle. It is situated in the mountains, fifty miles north-west of Shiraz. This natural stronghold stands on an isolated hill summit with perpendicular sides, accessible only by a few ledges and by a single path hewn in the face of the rock, and defended by towers and a gateway. It has played a great part in Iranian legend and history. Rustam, the great Iranian hero, only took it by stratagem, introducing his soldiers in salt bags placed on camels. It arrested for a time, the armies of Alexander. Timur captured it by the aid of Badakshan climbers. Kiuneir who visited it in 1810, found it defended by huge stones poised along the brink of the precipice, ready to be rolled over. In the latter part of the reign of Feth Ali Shah, a Mamasenni robber chieftain named Veli Khan Bakash lived here and was in constant rebellion. An army of Azerbaijan troops marched against him, besieged the Diz-i-Safid, and forced the garrison to surrender. About a hundred Lur women, rather than be captured by the Turkish soldiers, hurled themselves with their children from the summit and perished. In 1840, the Mamasennis were still in rebellion, and this time Motemed-ed-Dowleh, the eunuch Minuchehr Khan built three hundred of them with mortar into a living tower. They were finally subdued by Ferhad Mirza. Together with the Qashkais, they were again in rebellion during the reign of Reza Shah in 1928-29.
- (3) The third excursion from Shapur is to the village of Zaidi, and from there across the hills to Naubandajan, where there is a building of the type seen at Naksh-i-Rustam and also at Pasargadæ. It might be a sigri or a mortuary for the final rites of the Zoroastrian dead, or "the survival of an older fashion of interment than the rock tomb of Darius."

¹ "Journey Through Persia."



RELIEF AT NAQSH-I-BAHRAM.

CHAPTER XLV

FROM SHIRAZ TO YEZD

FROM Shiraz to Yezd the traveller has two alternatives. The first is to proceed via Persepolis to Dehbid, and then take the old caravan route to Yezd, and the second is to proceed back to Isfahan, and then go to Yezd via Nain. The latter is a needless waste of time and money, and the former is quite good, and is much the shorter of the two routes.

Dehbid, it will be remembered, is a small village of a few domed huts, at an elevation of 7,500 feet. The population is about two hundred, and there was a telegraph station of the Indo-European Telegraph Department,¹ in a square walled garden of poplar trees, where also is a rest-house. The cold here is intense, and it is reputed to be the coldest place in Iran. The town is one hundred and thirty miles north-west of Shiraz, and possesses a shooting box of Bahram V. or Bahram Gor.

From Dehbid the road strikes north-east, and five miles from it the descent of the Gushti Pass (The Gardan-i-Gushti) is commenced. It is remarkable during snowy weather that though the Dehbid side of the pass is covered with snow, the hills on the other side of the pass are entirely free from it. The demarcation is exceedingly sharp. Just before getting out of the pass, a road is seen on the left-hand side. This is the road that motors take, coming down from Abadeh to Dehbid, when the main road is covered with snow and impassable.

Ten miles from the commencement of the Gushti Pass the ruined caravanserai of Hanashk is passed, at an elevation of 6,450 feet. It is situated on the left bank of a river. There is plenty of good water available here, but no food-stuffs. The road then enters a plain, and goes through a kavir or salt desert. The village of Mihrabad is passed, surrounded by extensive walled cultivation. The water here is obtainable by kanats. There is an excellent caravanserai, and any amount of food-stuffs can be obtained.

Twelve miles from Mihrabad, at an elevation of 5,050 feet, is the town of Abr Quh, the first of the two oases in this otherwise desert route. The town of Abr Quh boasts of great antiquity. The geographer Istakhri (A.D. 950) thus describes the town:—

“Abrkuh or Warkuh is a fortified city, densely populated, and of about one-third the size of Istakhr. The houses are lattice-worked, and most of the buildings, as well as the buildings at Yezd, are built with colonnades (or vaulted domes). It is a barren place; there are no trees or gardens around it, except at a distance, but the soil is productive, and the living is cheap.”

On the right of the road, approaching Abrkuh is a large ruin called the Dakhmeh-i-Darab (Structure of Darab), after the name of Darius Codomannus, the last of the Achæmenians. It is the ruins of a fortress.

On the left of the road on an elevation stands the ruins of a building of mud and brick, known as the Dakhmeh-i-Gabarha (Structure of Gabars). Close by are the ruins of an old fire temple. That such a fire temple did exist in Abrkuh is testified by Mahomedan writers. Ibn Haukal in the tenth century says:—“In the vicinity of Abrkuh are considerable heaps of ashes. The common people say that here was the fire of Nimrod (into

¹ Now no more.

which he caused Abraham to be thrown). but this is not true ; the fact is that Nimrod and the Kings of Canaan dwelt in the land of Babylon."

Yakut (A D. 1220) says :—

" At Abrkuh, there is a large hill of ashes, which the inhabitants claim was the fire of Abraham, lighted by Bardah and Salamah. But in the book of the Avesta, which is the book of the Magi, I have read that So'da (Sudabah) the daughter of Tubba, wife of Keikaus, fell in love with his son Kei Khushru (Siawush). She endeavoured to seduce him, but he rejected her, whereupon she told his father that he had tried to dishonour her, which was a lie. Thereupon Keikhoshru built a large fire at Abrkuh, for an ordeal, and said . 'If I am innocent, the fire will not harm me ; if I am guilty as claimed, the fire will devour me.' At this he entered into the fire and came out of it unhurt, without having suffered any harm. In this way, he dispelled the entire charge against him. The ashes of that fire are to be seen at Abrkuh in the shape of a large hill, and to-day it is called the Mountain of Abraham. But Abraham never saw the land of Fars, nor entered it : he abode in Kutharabba, in the land of Babylon. I have read elsewhere, however, that Abraham came to Abrkuh and prohibited its inhabitants from employing cows in farming ; consequently they do not employ cows in this way, although there are plenty in the country. Abu Bekr Mohammed, who is known as Al-Harbi of Shiraz, states . 'I was in Abrkuh three times, but I never saw rain fall within the walls of the city, and the people said that this was owing to the prayers of Abraham.' This talk about the fire, and the honour of Siawush is mentioned by Firdausi in the Shah Nameh.

Abrkuh is one hundred and sixty-four miles from Shiraz, and has a population of about 8,000 inhabitants. The plain of Abrkuh is fifty-two miles wide, and runs roughly north-east to south-west, and is bounded on both sides by mountains. The whole plain is a kavir or salt desert, the village of Mīhrabad lying on the western border. Abrkuh was the place of assembly of the adherents of Lutf Ali Khan Zend, before his last attack on Shiraz in 1793.

There is one legend connected with a Mahomedan saint at Abrkuh worthy of mention. It is told by Hamdalla Mustaufi (A.D. 1340). He says there was in the town the tomb of a Mahomedan saint, named Taus-el-Haramein (Peacock of the two sanctuaries, of Mecca and Medina), and he reports that the walls of a building would not allow a roof to enclose it, for whenever a roof was erected over the tomb, some supernatural power always destroyed it. He also mentions that no Jews could exist in Abrkuh for more than forty days.

From Abrkuh to the next oasis of Deh Shir is a dreary journey of about fifty miles through a kavir. The village of Deh Shir is situated five miles to the north of Abrkuh Plain, on the southern slope of the hills. The village contains mud houses with domed roofs, but has a good caravanserai. There are the remains of an old fort called the Kaleh-i-Shir, supposed to have been built by a king named Mohammed Musafir, there being an inscription to that effect over the gateway in enamelled tile work. There is a spring of brackish water here.

From Deh Shir to the next village of Fakhrabad the road is fairly good for motors. Fakhrabad is situated in a valley between cliffs. It is a small village surrounded by cultivation, trees and gardens, and plenty of water can be obtained here.

From Fakhrabad to Gariz the road goes over a track. Gariz has a motor garage where visitors can spend the night. Provisions can be obtained here. About one farsakh from Gariz is Mount Irnan, a quaint rocky hill rising some eight hundred feet high, scarped all round. The hill is completely isolated, and there are some springs at the base. There is only one difficult path leading to the summit.

From Gariz the road goes through the Tang-i-Chenar four farsakhs distant and then past the village of Kulveh, where there is a small fort, then enters the Tang-i-Mehriz, a narrow defile west of Mehriz, once frequented by robbers, and then joins the main Yezd-Kerman road at Mehriz, twenty-two miles south of Yezd and five farsakhs from the Tang-i-Chenar. The road from Deh Shir to Mehriz is by no means good, but it is passable for motors.

Mehriz is situated at the foot of the northern slopes of the Shirkuh Mountains. The place is covered with mulberry bushes, and there is an immense amount of cultivation which stretches for miles. Mehriz is the junction of the Dehbid-Yezd and the Yezd-Kerman roads. It is bounded on the north and north-east by the Palangan range where there is a place of Parsi pilgrimage called Naraki.

From Mehriz to Yezd, a distance of twenty-two miles, the road is excellent.

Yezd—Elevation 3,870 feet

Yezd was one of the halting places of Zal and Rustam while on their march from Seistan to Fars. It was said to have been a desert when Alexander the Great conquered Iran, and it was here he built a prison for his royal captives, their dungeon being a deep well. Hafiz in reference to Yezd writes: "I was afraid of Alexander's prison, and prepared to go to the country of Suleiman." Yezdezird I (A.D. 399-420), father of Bahram Gor, is supposed to be the founder or rebuilder of the present Yezd, to whom it owes its name. After the Arab conquest, Yezd and Kerman became refuges and strongholds for the Zoroastrians, chiefly because of their remote situation in the desert. Marco Polo visited Yezd in 1272, the first European who set eyes on it; then followed the Italian friar Odoricus, and then the Venetian Josafa (1474). For two centuries the Atabegs of Yezd maintained an independent rule like the Atabegs of Luristan, until at the end of the thirteenth century, they were exterminated by the Mongol Ghazan Khan. Tavernier who visited it in the seventeenth century spoke highly of its fruits, while of the ladies of Yezd, he remarked that "certainly they are the handsomest women in Persia."

There is an Iranian saying that says "to live happily a man must eat the bread of Yezdikhast, have a wife of Yezd, and drink the wine of Shiraz."

Yezd is situated in a sandy plain surrounded by mountains on the north and south. The city is walled, and must be about five miles in circumference or a little more. Part of the wall has broken down, and the city has extended beyond the walls. The fort within the city which was built in A.D. 1137, has a double wall, and a ditch round it. The Ark or Citadel of the Governor has a wall of its own.

The fort was built in A.D. 1137 by Abu Jafar Sultan, Ala-ud-din Kanjar, but apart from the strength of its profile, is of no interest. Close to it is a dome falling into ruins which is ornamented in the interior with Cufic inscrip-

tions in dark blue, light green and brown on a white background. All the mosaics have fallen from the walls. There are the remains of the Vakt-i-Saat, which consisted of a college, a library, and an observatory, all built by Sayed Ruknuddin (A.D. 1325). This Sayed later on was accused of the murder of a rich Christian on the theory that otherwise he could not have obtained so much money for his college. He was exposed to all sorts of insults, but was finally released and died honoured by all and was buried under the dome.

Every decent house in Yezd has at least two underground storeys of rooms, and air is conveyed to these rooms by means of badgirs or wind towers, which can be seen rising from the roofs of some of the houses. In some of the houses there is a garden. Most of the houses are built of sun-dried bricks plastered with mud on the outside. Domed abambars or water reservoirs approached by steep flights of steps are also a feature of the houses.

The badgirs or wind towers of Yezd are an ingenious device for catching the wind and conveying it down to the various rooms. The ventilating shafts are very high and quadrangular, with three or more openings on each side at the summit, and have corresponding channels to convey the wind down into the rooms below. The lower apertures of the channels are blocked, except on the side where the wind happens to blow, and draught is created from the top downwards, sweeping the whole room, and rendering it cool and pleasant even in the hottest days of summer. On account of the accumulation of sand, the whole city is below the level of the desert, and a device of this sort is necessary to protect the inhabitants from the suffocating heat of the summer.

The water-supply is defective and irregular. There are no perennial streams of any importance, and all the irrigation works are dependent on artificial subterranean canals and kanats, and these are subject to the snowfall on the hills.

The streets of Yezd are narrow and winding, dirty and unpaved, with high walls on either side. One of the features is that there are numerous arches over the narrow streets. It is supposed they are made to protect the side walls from collapse.

There are three unimportant maidans in Yezd—the Maidan-i-Khan where the executions used to take place, the Maidan-i-Shah, and the Mil Khatma.

The bazaars are covered and well stocked with goods. The streets are irregularly planned, the older ones being dark and dirty, while the new main bazaar is well built and lighted, and the newer arcades are lofty and handsome. Russian goods have replaced European goods.

The chief cultivated products of Yezd are wheat, barley and other cereals, cotton, opium and tobacco. The vine flourishes near Yezd, and wine is made by the Zoroastrians. The exports consist of almonds, pistachios, tobacco, opium, colouring matter, walnut wood, silk, wool, cotton carpets, felts, skins, asafoetida, shoes, copper pots, sugar, sweetmeats for which Yezd is celebrated. Henna is brought to Yezd from Minab or Bunder Abbas. The chief imports are spices, cotton goods, yarn, prints, copper sheeting, Indian tea, powdered sugar, etc. Yezd is a great trading centre and the people of Yezd are supposed to be great travellers and are good business men.

Silk weaving too is one of the chief industries of the Yezidi, the mulberry being cultivated in great abundance in the neighbourhood, and Yezd is noted for its silk handkerchiefs. Weaving of chadars and cotton is the most important industry now. Yezd felt-carpets are only made to order.

The climate of Yezd on the whole is dry and healthy. Surrounded by mountains on all sides, there are two different climates close at hand. The climate of the hills is temperate in summer but cold in winter, when the climate of the plains is comparatively warm. From the north-east the wind comes down in spring and summer with great force, bringing sand stones with it.

There are sixty-five public baths and many public schools and caravan-serais. There are said to be fifty mosques, but the only mosque of any note is the imposing building known as the Masjid-i-Juma inside the fort. It was originally founded by Sultan Ala-ud-Dowleh Garshasp in A.D. 1119 (A.H. 513). It was rebuilt by Sayed Rukn-ud-din in A.H. 777 (A.D. 1375), and its mosaic work bears the date of A.H. 877 (A.D. 1472), in which year Mir 'Chakmak covered it with beautiful designs. It is entered by a lofty gateway of a type peculiar to Yezd, but the mosaic work has almost all fallen off, and the mosque is more or less in ruins, and the dome is stripped nearly bare. The doors have wonderful wood carving on them, and passing through them the mosque is seen to lie at right angles. The interior is still in good condition, the prevailing colour being blue. The mosque has an imposing blue-tiled facade, and high minarets. It was this mosque that won for Yezd the name of Dar-el-Ibadat or Seat of Worship.

Outside modern Yezd is the shrine known as Sheikh Dad, which possesses a fresco representing Ali, his two sons, and favourite servants. Taki-ud-din Dada Mohammed was born at Isfahan, and on his arrival at Yezd was treated as a rival by the Mullahs, but was finally accepted as their chief. He died in A.H. 700 and his shrine was raised in A.H. 726, the term Sheikh Dad being a corruption.

The population of Yezd is about 60,000, the majority of whom are narrow-minded Sayeds. Its people are distinguished for strictness and bigotry. Out of the 60,000, about 7,000 are Zoroastrians, of whom a thousand live in the actual city. I shall devote a separate chapter to them.

The Indo-European Telegraph Department had two officers here, the senior of whom did the work of British Vice-Consul. The Imperial Bank of Iran has also got a branch in Yezd. There is a garage in the Mahomedan quarter for travellers who visit Yezd, but those that have any interest in Zoroastrianism or care to go to the Zoroastrian quarter will find a ready welcome among them.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE ZOROASTRIANS OF YEZD

THE main interest of Yezd lies not in its buildings, nor in its mosques, but in the Zoroastrians or the Parsis, called by the contemptuous name of Guebre by their Mahomedan brethren, the word "guebre" standing for *kafir* or infidel.

The name Parsi has been retained from Fars or Pars, their native country, of which Persepolis was the capital.

The last of the Sassanian Kings, Yezdezird III, was defeated at the battle of Nehavend, and Iran fell into Arab hands. The Arabs after having slain as many of the Zoroastrians as they could, tried to enforce the Mahomedan religion on the survivors. The fire-temples of the Zoroastrians were destroyed or converted into mosques. The religion revived by Ardeshir Babegan, the true religion of ancient Iran, suffered an eclipse. Every effort was made to blot it out with blood and steel, but all efforts were in vain. The old religion is practised by the few Zoroastrians in Yezd and Kerman, and now scattered over other parts of Iran as well. Through endless persecution, these brave men have kept the eternal fires going in Iran. The others, rather than sacrifice their religious convictions and their independence, preferred to abandon their native land, and migrated with their families to India, where their descendants, the Parsis of India, still carry on their ancient faith.

Yezd and Kerman were two places difficult of access, and hence the Zoroastrians congregated here. The Arabs too having given way to luxury and vice, had become too lazy to carry on their wholesale slaughter of the Zoroastrians. That does not mean to say that they were left unmolested or in peace. Several of them were compelled to turn Mahomedans. The remainder were subjected to degradations and insults of the worst possible kind, a few of which I mention below, as showing the mentality of their conquerors. As Malcolm¹ says :—

"The atmosphere of the town seems to have resembled that of a preparatory school for little boys. Up to 1895, no Parsee was allowed to carry an umbrella. Up to 1895 there was a strong prohibition upon eye glasses and spectacles; up to 1885, they were prevented from wearing rings, their girdles had to be made of rough canvas, but after 1885, any white material was permitted. Up to 1896, the Parsees were obliged to twist their turbans instead of folding them. Up to 1898, only brown, grey and yellow were allowed for the body garments, but after that, all colours were permitted except blue, black, bright red or green. There was also a prohibition against white stockings, and up to about 1880, the Parsees had to wear a special kind of peculiarly hideous shoe with broad turned-up toe. Up to 1885, they had to wear a torn cap. Up to about 1880, they had to wear tight knickers, self-coloured, instead of trousers. Up to 1891, all Zoroastrians had to walk in town and even in the desert they had to dismount if they met a Mussalman of any rank whatsoever. The houses of both the Parsees and the Jews with the surrounding walls had to be built so low that the top could be reached by a Mussalman with his hand extended; they might, however, dig down below the level of the road. The walls had to be splashed with

1 "Five Years in a Persian Town."

white round the door. Double doors, the common form of Persian door, were forbidden, also rooms containing three or more windows. Badgirs were still forbidden, but in 1900, one of the bigger Parsee merchants gave a large present to the Governor, and to the Chief Mujtahid to be allowed to build one. Upper rooms were also forbidden."

"Up to 1860, no Parsee could engage in trade. They used to hide things in their cellar rooms and sell them secretly. Latterly they could trade in caravanserais or hostleries, but not in the bazaars, nor could they trade in linen drapery. Up to 1870, they were not permitted to have a school for their children."

"The amount of the jaziya or tax upon infidels differed according to the wealth of the individual Parsee, but it was never less than two tomans, which represented in those days a labourer's wage for ten days. The money had to be paid on the spot, when the farrash who was acting as collector, met the man. The farrash was at liberty to do what he liked when collecting jaziya. The man was not even allowed to go home and fetch the money, but was at once beaten until it was given. About 1865, a farrash collecting this tax tied a man to a dog, and gave a blow to each in turn. The jaziya was finally repealed by Nasr-ed-din Shah, who issued a firman to that effect on September 27th, 1882. It was chiefly owing to influence brought to bear on him through the Parsees of Bombay, that the Shah repealed the tax. They worked through the agency of the Society for the Amelioration of Zoroastrians in Persia, which they had founded in 1854, and sent a representative to Persia at the same time to look after the interests of their co-religionists."

"About 1891, a Mujtahid caught a Zoroastrian merchant wearing white stockings in one of the public squares of the town. He ordered the man to be beaten and the stockings taken off. About 1860, a man of seventy years of age went to the bazaars in white trousers of rough canvas. They hit him about a good deal, took off his trousers, and sent him home with them under his arm. Sometimes Parsees would be made to stand on one leg in a Mujtahid's house until they consented to pay a considerable sum of money. Occasionally, however, the childish mockery that pervaded the persecuting ordinances enabled the Zoroastrians to evade the disabilities proposed. For instance, as the Jews had to wear a patch on the coat, the Mujtahids in about 1880, tried to make the Parsees wear an obvious patch on the shirt. Mohammed Hasan Khan was then Governor, and Mulla Bahram of Khurramshar, a Parsee, asked him to arrange that his people should have three days' respite to get the patches ready. During these three days the Parsee women set to work, and made a neat embroidered border round the neck and opening of the shirt. This the Parsees exhibited as the required patch; and as it was very obvious, and was certainly an insertion, there was really nothing to be said."

"In the reign of Nasr-ed-din Shah, Maneckjee Limjee, a British Parsee from India, was for a long while in Teheran as a Parsee representative. Most of the Parsee disabilities were then withdrawn, and even those with regard to houses. The law of inheritance, however, was not altered, according to which a Parsee who has become a Mussalman takes precedence of his Zoroastrian brothers and sisters."

"About 1883, some time after this firman had been promulgated, one of the Parsees, Rustam Ardeshir Dinyar, built in Kucha Biyuk, one of the villages near Yezd, a house with an upper room, slightly above the height to which the Zoroastrians used to be limited. Having heard

the Mussalmans were going to kill him, he fled by night to Teheran. Another Parsee, Tirandaz, who was mistaken for him was killed, but the house was not destroyed."

"In 1898, Muzafferuddin Shah gave a firman to Dinyar, the then Qalantar of the Parsee Anjuman or Committee, revoking all the remaining Parsee disabilities, and making it unlawful to use fraud or deception in converting Parsees to Mohammedanism."

"When Maneckjee was at Yezd about 1870, two Parsees were attacked by two Mussalmans outside the town. One was killed, and the other was badly wounded, as they had tried to cut off his head. The Governor brought the criminals to Yezd, but did nothing to them. Maneckjee got leave to take them to Teheran. The Prime Minister, however, told him that no Mussalman would be killed for a Zoroastrian, and they would only be bastinadoed. Maneckjee enquired whether it was true that the blood price of a Zardushti (or Zoroastrian) was to be seven tomans. He got back the official reply that it was to be a little over."

Lastly, the Zoroastrians in the hot weather were not allowed to cool their drinking water in *koozas*, or drink it therefrom. They were told they had to drink what water they could get, and if it was warm they could not cool it.

Some years ago, a general Mussalman rising took place against the Babis in Yezd, and the Babis were massacred in hundreds. The Zoroastrians would have shared the same fate had it not been due to telegrams being constantly sent to Teheran to the authorities in power.

There was no such thing as justice for them in Iran, and even up to recent times their fire-temples and Towers of Silence were attacked and broken into by Mussalman crowds, and the fires put out, their sacred books destroyed, their temples desecrated in the most insulting manner. There is a story told of a Mahomedan Governor of Khorassan called Tahir (A.D. 820), who was known as the "Ambidextrous," and was founder of the Tahirid dynasty. He was a fanatical bigot, and hated the Zoroastrians and their scriptures. A Mahomedan who was originally descended from a Zoroastrian family, tried to reform him, and gave him a book on the precepts given by Buzurj-Mehr, the Prime Minister of Anushirwan the Just. He asked for permission to translate it into Arabic. Tahir exclaimed, "Do the books of the Magians still exist?" He then issued an order that every Zoroastrian should bring to him on pain of death a man¹ of Zoroastrian books, in order that they might be burned. Many valuable books were thus destroyed.

However, in recent years, thanks to the help by their comrades from India, and the growing Bahai sect, which pleaded for religious liberty and toleration, and above all, thanks to a kind and enlightened Ruler like Reza Shah, their bad days are over, and their condition considerably ameliorated. No one has done so much for the Zoroastrians, since the days of the Arab conquest, as this benevolent monarch, Reza Shah Pahlavi.

Through persecutions such as mentioned above, these wonderful men have kept the sacred fires burning. Hundreds of years of oppression have had little effect on their moral and physical condition. They are known

¹ A man = 14 lbs.

and trusted by all, and their probity and upright dealing is beyond question. They are hardy, and as proud and generous and benevolent as when the whole country belonged to them. The demoralising and lascivious conduct of the present race to whom they are subject has had no effect on their industry which is the most remarkable characteristic of the truth-loving Zoroastrian. Even all documents to be legal between two Mussalmans must be dated not only with the Mahomedan day, month and year but with the Zoroastrian.

If Yezd is the most enterprising trading centre of Iran, it is mostly due to the Zoroastrians living there. The religion teaches that every man must earn his food by his own enterprise and exertion.

The Zoroastrian quarter of Yezd is infinitely superior to the Mahomedan one. The houses are nicer and cleaner, the streets broader and well kept, the women go about unveiled, and are robust and healthy. Their doorways lead into a long porch, often pierced by a sky-light to admit light. From this porch, a passage leads into one of the courtyards. Some of the houses have two courtyards. In the courtyard, which is generally paved, is an open tank and some flower-beds. The flower-beds are irrigated from the tank. The houses as a rule consist of one storey underground, and one above ground. The roofs are paved with flat bricks. The Zoroastrian houses are clean and well kept. The leading Zoroastrian at the time of my visit was Arbab Rustam Mobed Khoshru, a really kind and hospitable man always willing to help.

Thanks to the aid of the Parsis of Bombay, a school has been opened for the Zoroastrians in Yezd, and a charitable dispensary for Zoroastrians only, run by a Parsi doctor from Bombay. A philanthropic gentleman, Mr. P. D. Marker of Bombay, has opened an orphanage, called Marker Hall, in Yezd for Zoroastrian children. Excellent work is being done there.

The Zoroastrians have great influence. On any occasion of moment an extraordinary meeting of the Council is at once called. Most of them are merchants of well-known probity, farmers, masons or gardeners. As gardeners they are renowned and in great demand. Some of them make cloth called "shal." The women make their own cloth at home, and wear native cotton cloth called "kerbas."

The spiritual guidance of the Zoroastrians is in the hands of the Dasturs and the Mobeds. In civic matters, the community is under the leadership of an Anjuman (Council or an Assembly), headed by a Kalantar. The priests go out in turns to the various villages where there are Zoroastrians.

That brings me to the last point with reference to this brave and honest community, and that is their places of worship. There is the big Atash Bahram or Atash-i-Varahran (Fire of Victory) and two or three small fire-temples called Adarian in Yezd itself. The buildings are entirely unpretentious, simple outside, and have a back room wherein the sacred fire is kept burning, and covered with ashes, by a specially deputed priest. It is practically hidden, and the doors are protected by iron bars.

I have spoken so often of the "sacred fire." Let it not be supposed for one moment that the Parsis are fire-worshippers, as people so often like to make them out to be. Some time ago, a Mahomedan Iranian lit a cigarette, blew out the match, and facetiously remarked:—"This is your Ahura Mazda, and he is extinguished." Mistaken notions like that

are far too common, so a word of explanation is needed. The Parsis are not "fire-worshippers" or "worshippers of the elements" because they refuse to defile fire, air, earth or water. They are no more fire-worshippers than the Roman Catholics are candle-worshippers. They worship God, and only one God, and do not admit idolatry, although they say that for every good thing that Ahura Mazda the good spirit does something equally unpleasant is done by Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit. They revere fire and the sun as symbols of glory, heat and purity: and also because it is one of the most necessary things in creation to the human being. The fire that the Parsis have in their temples, is not ordinary fire, but fire that has been purified for the purpose. The process of purification is this:—Several fires if possible, originally lighted by some natural cause such as lightning, are brought in vases. Over one of these fires is placed a flat perforated tray of metal in which small pieces of very dry sandalwood are made to ignite by the mere action of the heat, but must not actually come in contact with the flame below. From this fire a third one is lighted in a similar manner, and this operation is repeated nine times, each successive fire being considered purer than its predecessor, and the result of the ninth conflagration being pronounced absolutely pure.¹

It is really the idea of the purifying process that the Parsis revere more than the fire itself, and the ninth fire alone is considered worthy of occupying a special place in their temple. So in their life, they aim at "Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta" or "Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni"—"Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds," the keynote of the Zoroastrian religion. They aim at purifying their thoughts, words, and actions.

This is not the place to discuss the Zoroastrian religion, but I mention a few points to give my readers an idea as to why the Zoroastrian dislikes defiling the elements. Light was the type of the good, darkness of the evil spirit: Ahura Mazda had said unto Zoroaster, "My light is concealed under all that shines." That is one of the reasons why the Zoroastrian turns towards the fire that burns in his house and on his altars: that is why in the open air he turns towards the sun, as the noblest of all lights, and that by which God sheds his divine influence over this earth, and perpetuates the works of his creation. Zoroaster declared that the following injunctions were laid upon him by the guardian angels of animals and the elements²:—

- (1) "Guard my herds and flocks," said the holy Bahman (Vohu-mano), "O man of God! These I received from the Almighty; these I commit to you. Let not the young be slain, nor those that are still useful."
- (2) "Servant of the Most High!" exclaimed the dazzling Ardibesht (Asha Vahista), "Speak to the royal Gushtasp from me: say that unto thee, I have confided all fires. Ordain the mobeds, the dastoor, and herboods to preserve them, and neither to extinguish them in the water, nor in the earth; bid them erect in every city a temple of fire; and celebrate in honour of that element, the feasts ordained by law. The building of fire is from God; and what is more beautiful than that element? It requires only wood and odours. Let the young and the old give these, and their prayers shall be heard. I give it over to thee, as I received it from God. Those who do not fulfil my words, shall go to the infernal regions."

¹ Sykes, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

² From Malcolm's "History of Persia."

- (3) Shahrevar (Kshthra-Variya) next spoke : “ Oh thou pure man said this angel, “ When thou art upon the earth, tell all men my words ; bid those who carry the lance, the sword, the dagger, and the mace, clean them each year, that the sight of them may put to flight those that cherish bad designs. Bid them never place confidence in wicked men, nor in their enemies.”
- (4) Espendermad (Spenta-Armaiti) exclaimed : “ Thou, who shalt be as a blessing unto mankind, preserve the earth from blood, uncleanness and from carcases ; carry such where the earth is not cultivated, and where neither man nor water passeth. Fruits in abundance shall reward labour ; and the best king is he who rendereth the earth most fertile, say this unto men from me.”
- (5) The angel Khordad (Haurvatat) said :—“ I confide to thee. O Zoroaster ! the water that flows, that which is stagnant, the water of rivers, that which comes from afar and from the mountains, the water from rain and from springs. Instruct men, that it is water which gives strength to all living things. It makes all verdant. Let it not be polluted with anything dead or impure, that your victuals, boiled in pure water, may be healthy. Execute thus, the words of God.”
- (6) After Khordad had finished, Amerdad (Ameretat) said : “ O Zoroaster ! bid men not destroy, nor pull, except in season, the plants and the fruits of the earth ; for these were meant as a support and blessing to man and unto animals.”

Zoroaster was also instructed to establish in every place a priest who should read the sacred volume or the Avesta, and these were ordained to keep pure the elements.

These were the leading principles of the religion of Zoroaster. The general maxims taught in the Zend Avesta were moral and excellent, and calculated to promote industry and virtue ; the principal tenets of the faith Zoroaster taught were pure and sublime. In hygiene, his laws are unequalled by any other religion.

In every Zoroastrian village in the vicinity of the city of Yezd is a small Adarian, or a minor place of worship.

Fifteen miles south-west of Yezd is the town of Taft, full of Zoroastrians. Here is seen an old dome of a fire-temple ; it is empty and the doors have gone, but the roof and walls still show flowered tiles and fresco paintings and enamelled work. Hard by are the ruins of a shrine built by Shah Niamatullah before he went to Mahun. Close to it are some beautiful tombstones of Yezd marble.

The Zoroastrian buildings in Yezd and the neighbourhood are as follows :—

- (1) Mr. P. D. Marker's Orphanage and School.
- (2) The Marker Girls' School.
- (3) The Jehangir Industrial School, where the students are taught industries of all kinds.
- (4) The Girls' School at Khoramshah.
- (5) Sir Ratan Tata Medical Hall and the Bai Dinbai Desai Dispensary.

CHAPTER XLVII

NOTE ON THE ROAD FROM ISFAHAN TO YEZD

ON leaving Isfahan, the road passes by the ruins of Shahristan, the old residence of the nobles. The Urchin range is on the south, and on the east are cliffs with sharply defined edges. The pigeon towers, cylindrical in shape with castellated tops and built with massive walls, are next passed. A mountain pass about two farsakhs from Isfahan leads into a flat plain, barren and ugly. There are a few kanats on the north. The ruined village of Gulnabad is passed, and just beyond, a layer of salt is seen over the desert. The track is metalled but liable to floods. Twenty-nine miles east of Isfahan is the village of Saqzi, at an elevation of 5,178 feet, and having about four hundred inhabitants. It is a walled village flanked with round cornered towers. Here is a large solidly built caravanserai with two rooms up above, and ten below around the courtyard. The water here is quite brackish. It is on the edge of a salt marsh, and unhealthy. There is a police post here.

About one farsakh east of Saqzi, and north of the road, are seen five curious parallel lines of mud heaps, stretching from north to south. They are flat-topped and vary from twenty to forty feet in height, the central row of all being the highest of the series. Each of these hills is precisely where there is a gap in the mountain range. The road goes through a kavir.

Another seventeen miles of steady ascent brings the traveller to the village of Kuh Pa, elevation 5,920 feet. The town is built in a most irregular shape, and is surrounded by a high mud wall, castellated with round turrets. The town contains about seven hundred inhabitants and the water-supply is by two kanats of brackish water. There are three caravanserais of sun-dried bricks inside the wall, and a few shops. There is a dome of a mosque rising a little higher than all the other domes above each dwelling. A few abbas or cloaks are made here though it was once the seat of a famous cloak weaving industry. The majority of the houses on the northern side are in ruins, and most of the doorways of houses are sunk about one to three feet below the level of the street. There is an Iranian Telegraph Office here.

Outside the town is a large caravanserai of burnt brick. It has round towers at corners, is about sixty yards square, and facing the town. The tiled roof is about fourteen inches thick, and has an all-round parapet six to seven feet in height, with loopholes in each face, the top of the parapet being about twenty-one feet from the ground. The walls of the building are massive. From the top of the caravanserai an excellent view of the town can be obtained.

Between the caravanserai and the city is a sunken well, with a flat roof, and four ventilating shafts to keep the water cool. Further away is a garden. South of the town are verdant gardens and trees; to the west is an immense flat, while to the north a low range of hills is visible.

Six miles beyond Kuh Pa is the small village of Kamalbek, and six miles further on the ruined village of Moshkianuh with a few green trees near it.

The plain rises gently up to the village of Tudesht at the foot of the mountain, altitude 6,300 feet. Then after a gradual ascent between hills to

the north and south, the road enters a flat valley about one and a half miles long and three-quarters of a mile broad. The valley is surrounded by hills, and there are two villages, one to the east, and another to the west of the valley. The latter has buildings with masonry walls, and there are masonry enclosures, round wheat fields and fruit-tree groves. The road continues to ascend up to 7,620 feet, the highest point of the plain. There are two or three smaller hamlets in the centre of the plain.

A second basin is next encountered with a few clusters of trees. The hills are enveloped in a covering of sand and salt. To the north, the Fishark and Sara mountain range extends in a general direction from north-west and south-east. To the north is seen a peculiar two-pointed hill, much redder in colour than the hills round about. Close to the hills, villages are passed. Yazih village has a stone wall round it. Wheat is cultivated here, and the water is good. Beyond is the village of Mazemullahmar, and near it Fehzabad. A mile beyond Fehzabad, the ascent of the Bilabad Pass is commenced, its highest altitude being reached at 7,550 feet. Directly in front of the pass is a high peak, and to the right is another and higher summit. Whirlwinds are pretty frequent here. The pass is about six miles long, and at the other end is the fine caravanserai of Bilabad, built in A.D. 1652, and even now in good repair. It stands at an elevation of 6,100 feet. Two miles east of the place, a track goes on to Nao Gumbaz, but the main motor road goes to Nain, a village fifteen miles north-east of Bilabad, where there is a rest-house of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

The altitude of Nain is 5,300 feet, and it lies between the Bilabad and Surmeh Kuh Mountains on the west, and an insignificant range of mountains on the east. The population is about 5,000. The bazaar is a small one of about sixty shops, but well roofed in, and there are four caravanserais. The town is surrounded by a wall strengthened by semi-circular loopholed towers, and built of sun-dried bricks. Outside the wall is a ditch about fifteen feet deep and nineteen and a half feet broad. The walls are now in a ruinous condition and the five gates that used to be there originally have been broken down. Opposite the south gate, outside the walls, are a few houses; the ground outside on the western side overlooks the town, and gardens stretch from the west to the north side of the town. Water is brackish. There is a masonry building with a blue dome outside the town, whose entrance faces the town. It is about seventy yards square, and has round corner towers.

From Nain the road goes south to Nao Gumbaz, where there is an ancient caravanserai of the time of Shah Abbas. It then goes through a kavir, enclosed to the south-west of the track by the south-easterly continuation of the Sara and Keble range; to the north-east by the Mehradji, Turkemani and the Duldul Mountains; and to the north by the Aparek and Abiane Mountains. During the rainy weather, the drainage of the latter two ranges is carried into the kavir. To the south-east, the Ardakan Mountains form a barrier. Between them and the Andjile Mountains is a gap through which the road passes in a south-easterly direction.

Antimony is found in the Mehradji Mountains, and copper, lead, nickel and antimony in the Anarek region. Silver is said to have been found in the Andjile.

In the middle of the kavir, towards the north-east, stands an isolated mountain known as the Siahkuh.

Chanoh is next passed, a desolate place with a rest-house in ruins. The water is not good here. Continuing through a sandy tract, the village of Shehrabad is reached. Here the roofs of the houses are semi-cylindrical like a vault, and not semi-spherical. A mud tower rises above them, and there are a few fields, and some fruit trees. About two or three miles beyond Shehrabad, kanats are encountered carrying water to the village of Nasirabad, a little to the east of the track. These kanats get more and more numerous, nearing Aqda.

Aqda, elevation 4,200 feet, is a large walled village, sixty-four miles north of Yezd. The town, said to have existed over a thousand years, having only three hundred houses, stands on a prominence against a background of mountains. Here there is a fine caravanserai and an abambar (water reservoir), built by a merchant of Resht about A.D. 1851. The village wall is about thirty feet high, but the mud fort is partly in ruins. The town is famous for its pomegranates, but there are date trees and myrtle bushes, and orchards in the neighbourhood, which make it look picturesque. Wheat, barley, musk and water-melons, apples, plums, peaches, grapes, figs and pomegranates are produced here. The water is plentiful and good.

Sixteen miles from Aqda is the village of Kiafteh, altitude 3,960 feet. The place has a round tower. About a mile to the north of it is the mosque of Semur-ed-din. The road now goes east-south-east through the gap in the mountains that run south-west and north-east. In the distance to the south is the Shirkuh Mountain.

Eight miles from Kiafteh, a low hill range with a pass (altitude 4,090 feet) is crossed. The pass is about a hundred feet above the plain. After the descent the road goes over a sandy tract, past sand-bars and sand-dunes. A little village is passed having a mud enclosure with towers, and an abandoned caravanserai. On the left-hand side of the road in the distance is the village of Bafro, well surrounded by a long expanse of verdant trees. South of it is the other village of Deabad, and then comes the abandoned village of Assiabo Gordoneh, now in ruins. This village at one time ran short of water. Several borings were made which can be seen at the present day, but were of no avail. The place had to be given up.

The picturesque village of Biddeh comes next. Here the habitations are cut into the high mud banks, and the houses are several storeys high. Here is an ancient aqueduct now in ruins, which carried the water over a high bridge from one side of a ravine to the other. The clay soil has been eroded by the action of water, and natural grottoes and deep contorted natural channels are seen. The place has a mosque standing high up on the cliff. Many of the houses are in ruins.

After a steepish ascent comes the village of Maibud, thirty miles from Yezd, at an altitude of 3,940 feet. Here there is an excellent caravanserai, with a domed tank of clear spring water. The city itself has many ruined houses. The population is about 3,000. There is a conspicuous ice house. Maibud is famous for the manufacture of ghileems, a durable hand-woven inferior kind of carpet. The colours are red and blue. Maibud has figured in history, and here were minted many of the coins of the Sassanian monarchs. In the northern part of the town is a castle with a drawbridge known as the Kaleh-i-Bashnigan. In the southern part is the castle called the Kaleh-i-Dir, with a double wall. South of the town is the grave of a Sultan Rashid.

Five miles to the north-east is the village of Ardekan, elevation 3,659 feet, with a population of 15,000 inhabitants. Here, in one of its villages

called Sharafad, there are some Parsis, about four hundred in number, and about a thousand each in the other two villages. Here is a caravanserai of burnt bricks in a good state of repair.

After leaving Maibud, the track goes through cultivated land for a while, and then traversing a sandy plain advances towards the mountains till Shamsi is passed, twelve miles further on. About eight miles from Shamsi it enters a region of sand-hills, the sand here moving from west to east, instead of in the usual south-westerly direction, as in Eastern Iran.

Sixteen miles beyond it is Hujjetabad with its fine caravanserai, the porch of which was vaulted over the high road. It has a reservoir of water. The place is cultivated by the Parsis of Jaffarabad. A mile north of the caravanserai is the village of Jaffarabad with trees and vegetation.

About eight miles from Yezd, the country gets very sandy, and there are high mountains to the south-west and east. On the right side of the track is the mud wall of Nusseratabad, with a few trees showing over the walls, while on the left is nothing but barren clayish sand. Half-way between Nusseratabad and Yezd, a four-towered well is to be seen, and a quarter of a mile further on, about four miles from Yezd, is the Mazareh Sadrih village.

The total distance from Isfahan to Yezd is two hundred and nine miles.

CHAPTER XLVIII

YEZD TO KERMAN

THE road from Yezd goes on to Mehriz, and proceeds to Zeinuddin, standing solitary in the middle of the desert, and by the side of a salt-water well, at an altitude of 5,170 feet. Here there is a tumbling circular caravanserai with massively built watch towers. Mountains extend from the north-east to the south-east, the Sardeh Kuh range, and run quite close to the track to the south-east. To the west there are high walls, and to the north an open desert as far as Yezd.

The track from Zeinuddin to Kermanshahn is absolutely barren. At Kermanshahn, altitude 5,300 feet, twenty miles from Zeinuddin is a caravanserai, and good drinking water.

Rugged mountains now follow, and are about a mile to the west and south-west. After that, the road goes south, on an absolutely flat and desolate country of sand at the spur of the mountains to the west and south-west, and then enters a low pass at an altitude of 5,680 feet, and emerging on the other side goes through a yellow plain, encircled by mountains except to the south-east.

Shemsh, a most forlorn and cheerless place, altitude 5,170 feet, is next passed, with a caravanserai, and here the road goes over undulating country on sandy ground with occasional tracts of stone or gravel. Twenty-two miles from Shemsh is the big village of Anar, at an altitude of 4,800 feet.

Anar is a large village mostly in ruins with a few trees and a mud fort. The water is quite good. The Indo-European Telegraph Department had a rest-house here, with an Armenian clerk in charge. Anar is the head of a small district with a population of 3,000 inhabitants, and produces a considerable surplus of grain, which is exported to Yezd. There is a shrine dedicated to Mohammed Salih bin Musa Kazim. In this shrine is an exquisitely carved Koran stand made of sandalwood. It has a length of fifty and a half inches and a breadth of seventeen inches. Round the outside are strips and rosettes of ivory. On the top of the upper panel is carved "Allah," and in the lower panel are the names of the twelve Imams in a most artistic tracery. The date, A.H. 761 (A.D. 1359), is inscribed on the inside, and the inscription states that the stand was carved for the shrine.

From Anar the road goes through a flat sandy desert for another eighteen miles to Beiaz, altitude 4,800 feet. It is a small village with a few mulberry trees and a decent caravanserai. The water comes from a small stream and is quite good. In the garden, known as Mazar-i-Shah, lies the tomb of Seljuk Shah, the brother of Malik Mohammed, the seventh Seljuk ruler who rebelled, was defeated, and escaped to Katif and Oman. He, however, returned to Kermanup on his brother's death, but was seized at Anar and killed.

From Beiaz onwards can be seen sand deposits all along the mountain ranges, forming a sort of an inclined plane.

The next village passed is Kushkuh, altitude 4,900 feet, where there is abundance of water and good cultivation, and extensive cotton plantations. On leaving Kushkuh behind, the road again goes through a sandy plain bounded by distant mountains. A few tamarisk shrubs are seen here

and there. From here the road to Bahramabad gets very bad, especially if there has been rain. Large pools of water are formed, and there is soft mud all along the road where cars are apt to skid.

Bahramabad, or as it is now called, Rifsanjan, is a walled village, and the centre of a considerable cotton trade. It owes most of its prosperity to the extensive cultivation of cotton exported from here direct to the Persian Gulf and India.

The district of Rifsanjan is particularly interesting from an antiquarian point of view. Iron spearheads, a foot long with a broad head, are often picked up. Sykes¹ says that he was told that an underground chamber was once broken into, and found to contain a coffin resting on china supports. An inscription was said to refer to a tribe called Bazil. At present, pottery of an inferior kind is manufactured here.

From Bahramabad (Rifsanjan) to Kabutar Khan, altitude 5,680 feet, travelling is bad. At Kabutar Khan are a few mud huts, an ice store-house, a flour mill, a building said to have been an arsenal, and a caravanserai.

The road now goes south-east, with rugged hills to the north-east, east and south. In the distance can be seen the mountains near Kerman. In the rainy season a very long salt marsh fills the lower portion of the valley, making progress difficult, and a track has to be taken on the sandy embankment at the foot of the hill-side. Two high peaks are seen in front to the south-east, the Kuh Djupahr, forming part of a low range extending in a south-east direction.

On the other side of the dried up salt marsh is Robat, with a huge caravanserai. From here the road goes over undulating ground, the valley getting nearer to Baghin. Baghin, thirty miles from Kabutar Khan, and at an altitude of 5,740 feet, has plenty of excellent water. The village is large with handsome walled gardens, and nicely kept wheat fields all around. At Baghin, the Shiraz-Kerman road via Niriz, joins the Yezd-Kerman road. The town is actually south-west of Kerman, and the road makes this long detour to avoid the Bademan Mountains to the north. By doing that, it passes over level land in the valley between those mountains and the Kuh Djupahr range. From Baghin, the track runs to the north-east, and from the highest point of the track, 5,980 feet, the whole Kerman plain with its semi-spherical sand-hills can be seen in the distance. Kuh Djupahr can be seen in the distance quite well.

Another thirteen miles of undulating ground and then the traveller enters Kerman. It is most essential to get to Kerman before sunset, otherwise the gates will be closed, and he will be left out.

¹ "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

CHAPTER XLIX

KERMAN

KERMAN is the Karmania of the ancients. In the Shah Nameh, it is mentioned that when Kai Khushru collected a force to fight against Turan, the Kings of Khuzistan and Kerman fought near him in battle. The next time we hear of Kerman is when Darius Codomannus was supposed to have met Alexander, but this is quite erroneous, for it was beyond the Caspian Gates near Rei that they met. However, Alexander traversed Karmania from east to west, Krateros entered it from Seistan, and Nearchus came here to report to Alexander about the safety of its fleet.

Kerman was supposed to be founded by Ardeshir Babegan, the first Sassanian King. After his conquest of Fars, Kerman was seized by Ardeshir. The last Parthian King, Artabanus V, was defeated and slain in desperate battle near Ram Hormuz, and a strongly Zoroastrian dynasty in the House of Sassan was established in Iran.

In the time of the Sassanians, Kerman enjoyed a state of peace. Shapur transported 5,000 Arabs from Nejd and Bahrein to Kerman. In the time of Anushirwan the Just, the Governor of Kerman was one Azad Mahan who had accumulated great wealth. Noshirwan at the time was thinking of constructing the Gate of Gates, but found his treasury empty. He paid a surprise visit to Azad Mahan, who not only gave a sum of money to complete the work, but also to found the city of Asterabad.

Kerman later on became a Nestorian (see under the Metropolitan of Fars). Here also fled Yezdezdird III, the last of the House of Sassan, who reigned a brief while before going to his fate in Merv. While the Arabs overran the country, Kerman offered little resistance.

After the death of Omar in A.H. 23 (A.D. 644) there was a general rising in Iran which was soon crushed. Forts were constructed and Arab colonies planted in Kerman and other countries. The Zoroastrians were still in possession of the highlands which were too cold for the Arabs.

In the reign of Ali, Kerman threw off its allegiance, along with Fars, but Ziad made the various rebel Chiefs fight against each other. In A.H. 67-69 (A.D. 687-88) the Kharijites again overran Kerman, and a few years later held the province for one and a half years, until their downfall. In A.H. 83 (A.D. 702) Abdur Rahman ibn Ashath, while engaged in fighting against the King of Kabul, rebelled and was defeated and fled to Kerman. A few years later a man called Ghinan was the ruler of Kerman. During his short term of seven years, he destroyed many fire-temples and forced the Zoroastrians to embrace Mahomedanism.

In A.D. 720 (A.H. 101) Yezid, son of Mohallab, rebelled against the Caliph and appointed a Governor in Kerman. After his death, his brothers went to Kerman, hoping that the Governor of a certain fort would be faithful to them, but they were caught and put to death.

In A.D. 867 (A.H. 253) Yakub-bin-Leith, of a robber tribe, having made himself master of Seistan, made himself master of Kerman, but his death soon took place, and Kerman became the sport of any adventurer. After being occupied by another robber called Abu Ali, it fell into the hands of the Dilemi dynasty.

In 1038 the Seljuks conquered Merv and Nishapur. Malik Kaward became King of Kerman, and he is the first Ruler of Kerman. He captured Oman, and built forts to close the only road leading from Seistan. He also captured Fars, and gave it to his brother Alp Arslan who later on besieged him in Kerman. After the latter's death Kaward contested the throne with Malik Shah, the son of Alp Arslan but was defeated and strangled in A.D. 1073 (A.H. 466). During the reign of Arslan Shah, caravans from every direction were passing through the province. His successor founded colleges and mosques and built a caravanserai at Sarbizan. Kerman rose to the zenith of its prosperity. His son Toghrul Shah succeeded him, but his four sons reduced the province to a state of anarchy after his death. At this juncture, the last of the Seljuks was overthrown by Sultan Shah, and the Ghazz were expelled from Sarakhs, and eventually migrated to Kerman. Here they behaved with great cruelty, ramming hot ashes down people's throats. Kerman was deserted, and eventually passed into the hands of the Ghazz tribe, but on the death of Malik Dinar in A.D. 1195, there was anarchy in the province again. The Ik family, coming from Darab, crushed the Ghazz, but there was constant warfare between the two. When Chengiz Khan came with his Mongol hordes, destroying every place in Iran, Kerman was saved in part due to its remoteness.

Borak Hajib, an official of the Kara Khitei, who was sent on an embassy to India, passing through Kerman was attacked by its Ruler. Shujauddin. He defeated him and put him to death, and eventually abandoning his journey to India, became Ruler of Kerman. After his death in A.D. 1234, his son-in-law Kutbuddin ruled for a year, was eventually deposed, but managed to regain the throne after fifteen years. Kutbuddin's widow, Turkan Khatun, succeeded him, and during her reign villages were founded, and kanats dug in every direction. Many kanat pipes have been stamped with her name. She died in 1282 and was succeeded by her son, who in turn was succeeded by his sister Padshah Khatun, wife of Keikhatu. Padshah Khatun was a capable woman and was a poetess. She strangled her brother, whose widow and sister brought about a rising, and Padshah Khatun was also strangled and buried in the Kuba-i-Sabz in A.D. 1294. In A.D. 1303 the Kara Khitei dynasty came to an end, and in 1340 the Muzaffer dynasty founded by Mohammed Muzaffer of Maibud near Yezd, ruled over Kerman. Muzaffer captured Shiraz, Isfahan and Tabriz. His sons, however, rose against him and blinded him. His son Shah Shuja succeeded him, Kerman being temporarily bestowed on his uncle Imamuddin Sultan Ahmed, who founded the Pa Minar Mosque, which stands to the present day.

In 1380 Timur with his hordes overran Iran and the Muzaffer dynasty, having just submitted to him and finally rebelled, was brought to an end by him in 1393. In 1421 Shah Rukh, Timur's son, marched to Kerman and here he was visited by the famous Shah Niamatullah whose shrine is in Mahun.

Kerman next fell into the hands of the Black Sheep dynasty, and later on of the White Sheep dynasty. The victorious Uzun Hassan had married Despina, a daughter of Carlo Johannes, one of the last of the Comneni Emperors of Trebizond. He was defeated in A.D. 1472 by Mohammed II of Constantinople in Asia Minor. On his death, family rivalries ruined the White Sheep dynasty.

His grandson Shah Ismail founded the Sefavi dynasty. He conquered Fars and Kerman and in 1509 defeated the Uzbeks who raided the province.

In 1596, Ganj Ali Khan was Ruler of Kerman. He built numerous caravanserais, bazaars and tanks. One of the tanks was so large that its fittings furnished 1,800 pounds of lead to Lutf Ali Khan, the last of the Zend dynasty, about two hundred years afterwards. In Kerman there is still a caravanserai and a square bearing the name of Ganj Ali Khan. An army from Kerman assisted Shah Abbas in his wars.

In 1720, Mahmud the Afghan invaded Kerman, and advanced on Isfahan and seized it. In 1747 Nadir Shah came to Kerman. After humorously remarking that the Governor Kuli Beg had grown fat, he ordered him to be pulled through a hole in the wall, his head being screwed off during the operation! He strangled the Mayor and seven hundred citizens whose skulls he built up into a pillar. The Zoroastrians of Kerman had assisted Nadir Shah at Kandahar in A.D. 1735, and as a recognition of their valour he had allowed a wall to be built round their area. Upon the anarchy following the death of Nadir Shah, the Afghans raided Kerman, and destroyed the Zoroastrian quarter. Shah Rukh Afshar obtained possession of Kerman, beat off an invasion of Seistanis and Baluchis and invaded Seistan.

In 1758 Kerim Khan Zend sent a force to attack Kerman. Shah Rukh was killed, and Kerman passed under the Zend dynasty. During the reign of Kerim Khan, Sayed Abdul Hassan Mahallati, the descendant of the chief of the assassins, was Governor of Kerman for some years, and built the house which was afterwards used by the Consulate.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Kerman rose to fame as the scene of the heroism of a noble character, and the inhuman brutality of a eunuch conqueror. Lutf Ali Khan, the last of the Zend dynasty, succeeded to the throne in 1789. He had previously invaded the province, but was forced to abandon it on account of want of supplies. A few years later, he was invited to Kerman by Mulla Abdulla, the Imam Juma. Agha Mohammed Shah, the Kajar eunuch, intent upon capturing Kerman, invested the city. Lutf Ali Khan held out with great bravery against the army, but the city eventually surrendered. Lutf Ali Khan escaped to Bam, and so great was the rage of Agha Mohammed Shah at Lutf Ali Khan having escaped, that he gave orders for 70,000 eyes to be gouged out, and when they were brought to him counted every one himself on the point of a dagger, and told his Minister, "Had one been wanting, yours would have been taken." The city was surrendered to the passion of the soldiery for three months, the buildings were razed to the ground, and 30,000 men, women and children were carried off into slavery. So great was this fiendish vengeance that for years only blind men, women and children were seen in the streets of Kerman.

But to return to Lutf Ali Khan. Having escaped to Bam, he was eventually betrayed by his host, who hamstrung his horse as he was mounting. He was captured and sent to Agha Mohammed Shah, who blinded him with his own hands and after excruciating and inhuman tortures had him put to death. Kerman then passed under Kajar rule.

Though Agha Mohammed Shah cherished the most implacable resentment against all the Zend family, and particularly against Lutf Ali Khan, he nevertheless admired the latter's character. It is said that some time before he took Kerman, he received news that his nephew and heir, Feth Ali Shah, had several sons born to him in one night. "May God grant," said Agha Mohammed, "that one of them may resemble Lutf Ali Khan."

Feth Ali Shah, the successor of Agha Mohammed, rebuilt the town on a small scale. In 1801 its Governor, Ibrahim Khan Zahiruddin, a member

of the Kajar tribe, rebuilt the town a little to the west of its original site, and dug kanats and founded villages. His son Abbas Kuli Mirza on his death collected a force to attack Yezd, but was deserted by his soldiers, and fled to Mazanderan. Kerman was then given to Hassan Ali Mirza. A few years later, Abbas Mirza, the Heir-Apparent of Feth Ali Shah, marched from Kashan to Yezd and Kerman which were in rebellion, but speedily submitted. There was another rebellion in 1839, which was soon put down.

In 1860 Mohammed Ismail Khan Nuri, under the title of Vakil-ul-Mulk, became Governor of Kerman. He repaired all the caravanserais and made the bazaars and founded many villages, and raised Kerman to a pitch of great prosperity. He also visited Seistan, but died from the effects of a summer spent there.

CHAPTER L

KERMAN—*Continued*

THE sights of Kerman can be divided into two parts, the sights outside the city and the sights in the city.

For the sights outside the city, the best place to start from is the British Consulate, situated at Zirisf, about a mile or two to the east of the town. Some little distance to the south of it are seen ancient fortifications on rocky hills.

The higher and more southern of the two is the Kaleh-i-Ardeshir, supposed to have been built by Ardeshir Babagan in A.D. 220. Access to it can only be got from the north-west side, facing the British Consulate, where there is a somewhat narrow and slippery track in the rock along a ravine. On the south side the hills are steep and precipitous, and the castle is inaccessible from there. On the north side too it is not easy of access.

The gateway is blocked with sand, but squeezing through a small aperture, it is possible to get inside the wall, within which are several small courts, and a series of tumble-down buildings. In the walls can still be seen the niches or receptacles in which grain and food were formerly stored. The interior of the fort is in a state of decay. The courts and spaces between the walls are blocked up with sand. There is a well of great depth bored in the rock which was made for the supply of water to the fort, whenever the larger tanks and wells constructed at the foot of the hills within the fortifications could not be used. According to legend, this well was connected with Khabis, but so many murders were committed by throwing the victims down it, that it was filled up about A.D. 1860. The exterior of the fort is built of sun-dried bricks on stone foundations, and the bricks are so welded together by age as to form a single solid mass. The whole structure stands five hundred feet above the plain, and is in a most commanding position and possesses a triple line of defence. From its summit, an excellent view of Kerman and the plain can be obtained. The other fort by its side to its north-west is the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar or Virgin's Fort. Some say that this fort formed part of ancient Kerman. The Kaleh-i-Dukhtar has a well preserved castellated wall, and a doorway in the rock at the end of the hill range. At the foot of the hill also, in a semi-circular wall, are a row of niches the exact purpose of which is not known. They may have formed part of an ancient stable for horses, or a portion of a hammam, or perhaps according to others, cells of a prison. Inside the lower wall at the foot of the hill was a moat about thirty feet wide, and fifteen feet deep. The outside wall was high, and had strong battlements and towers. The lower wall had four circular turrets. The upper wall ran along the summit of two ridges, and was parallel to the lower one, and extended down to and over the plain for about one hundred and twenty yards. Between the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar and Kaleh-i-Ardeshir, the principal buildings, the palace, etc., were situated but nothing now remains.

To the east of the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar and on the lower part of the hill on the other side of the road, there was another fortress which had two large walled enclosures in the plain at its foot, but that is demolished now.

In both the Kaleh-i-Ardeshir and the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar which also was built by Ardeshir Babagan, are found fragments of pottery with geometrical patterns and small circles upon them. Tiles and coins too have been found.

Mukadassi in the tenth century talks of three impregnable castles in Kerman—The Hisn, defended by a ditch, and directly outside the city gate, which is the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar; the Kaleh-i-Kuh on the crest of the hill, which is the Kaleh-i-Ardeshir; while the third one was supposed to be within the city near a mosque, and is probably where the Ark or Citadel is now.

In the south-west part of this crescent are three passes. One pass is between the Kaleh-i-Dukhtar and the Kaleh-i-Ardeshir; one between the Kaleh-i-Ardeshir and the ruins to the south of it; and one near the most southerly point of the crescent, where there is a narrow gap in the hills. Here, on the east side of the entrance, are the ruins of a wall and an outpost, and other buildings, and a large enclosure outside the pass to the south: on the eastern side on the lower slopes is a tall square roofless building, erected on a quadrangular base with corner turrets, and has three pointed arch doorways, to the east, west and south, and by the side of them are broad windows in couples. This building is of a more recent date than the castle on which it stands. Sykes¹ thinks it might be a fire-temple.

On the southern spur of the main crag, close to where the Duzdap road goes, is a detached cliff, which is ascended by one hundred and forty-three steps hewn in the rock. Sykes thinks it was probably a Nakkarah Khaneh or Drum Tower, where music was played at sunrise and sunset. But the marks of the chisel are fresh, and one account relates that it was built for the use of the Kajar King, Agha Mohammed Shah. It stands above the ancient city, the wall of which ran from almost underneath it. A little to the south of it is the deserted quarter of Farmitan, destroyed by the Afghans at the same time as they destroyed the Zoroastrian quarter.

The houses of Farmitan are not very ancient, their walls being in excellent preservation, but the domed roofs have fallen in. They are all composed of sun-dried bricks, and a few of the buildings have two storeys. There was a broad main road at the foot of the mountains, on the southern side of the city, with narrow and tortuous streets leading out of the principal thoroughfares.

Agha Mohammed Shah crossed the Salt Desert from Seistan and invested Kerman, whose forts were impregnable, and whose bazaars were famous for their beauty and wealth. Kerman fell to the conquerors, and the people were brutally treated. Lutf Ali Khan hastened from the coast to the relief of the city, and drove Agha Mohammed back to Kandahar. Under him, the Zoroastrians of Kerman were massacred, or compelled to adopt the Mahomedan religion. The Zoroastrians probably settled in Farmitan, and these ruins may be the ruins of Zoroastrian houses.

At the southern angle of the range is a gap with a platform built out from the cliff, and surrounded by a tomb. Below are the remains of a great ruined tank, the waters of which run to Baghin, while above is a fort which acted as a watch-tower, to warn the citizens of Afghan and Baluch raids.

Proceeding south, a cave known as the Kut-i-Kaftar or Hyaena's Home is passed. Steps lead up to it, while just below is a tank, showing that it must have been inhabited at some time.

On the face of the cliff, several hundred feet above the valley, is a big inscription, "Ya Ali," in white characters on the rock. It is said that every wish of those who climb up to the inscription will come true. It is a steep, almost perpendicular climb. The only way is to climb on all fours, and get a grip on the rock. A magnificent view of Kerman and of the valley below can be got from there.

¹ "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

Coming down, a few yards off is a rock supposed to possess marvellous properties. At the foot of the rock is an inscription, and round above are the usual votive offerings, red and white rags. This is a well-known place of pilgrimage for barren women, who after certain rites performed in front of and on the stone, and after spending a night in the ruins close by are said to have their wishes gratified.

Some years ago a Russian Political Agent, thinking this a nice picnic place and attracted by the lovely view, gave a picnic to the European community of Kerman, and invoked considerable merriment from the Iranians, who put a different construction on the European women going there.¹

The rock is inside a stone building near a tiny spring and its name is Tak-i-Ali (Arch of Ali). There are two trees by the side of it decorated with votive offerings. This spring is said to be connected with the Zindeh Rud, and is supposed to have run red at the time of the massacres at Isfahan in the eighteenth century.

West of the Ya Ali inscription in the plain below, where the ruins lie thick, close to a cemetery is a mound known as the Uzbegs' Fort, and close by is the tomb of Halima Khatoun, sister of the Imam Reza, and behind it is a mosque in honour of the Sahib Zaman. (He is the Imam who is considered to be always alive, and who will reveal himself as the Mahdi.)

The whole plain round here is full of ruins, not more than a century old, and lie directly under the lee of the mountains. There is, however, one building which is decidedly very ancient, a high building of a sienna colour with a dome of stone and mortar, the latter said to have been mixed with camel's milk which gives the mortar greater consistency. It is called the "Dome of the Guebres." The dome is quadrangular with two tiers of three windows each. A small lateral wall is next to the entrance. There is no inscription on the walls inside, which are absolutely bare. The interior diameter is thirty-eight feet, each face measuring eighteen feet. The apex is of brick, and there is a circular opening. A mud ruin touches its western side. It is the only stone building in Kerman. It is also said to have been the tomb of Sayed Mohammed Tabashiri, but this is doubtful. To the south of this dome, close to the limestone range, is a group of mud buildings known as Tandurustan, which are frequented mainly by Zoroastrians and occasionally by Mahomedans. Offerings of food are set out, and if the Peris eat them, the accompanying wish will be fulfilled.

In this corner is an enclosure in which is a solitary European grave, that of the Reverend Henry Carless of the Church Missionary Society, who died in Kerman in 1898. Moving westward from the grave of Carless, the Bagh-i-Zirish is approached. It consists of several gardens, and covers an area of about half a square mile. Beyond it are the ancient city walls, and keeping along, we get to the Zoroastrian quarter. Touching it to the north is their ancient suburb, laid desolate by the Afghans, the chief ruin known as Khana Farang (or European house), which is just outside what is known as the race-course, about half a mile away.

On the south-west side are the remains of the lines of investment of Agha Mohammed Khan. In the graveyard to the east of the city is the blue-domed shrine of Hussein Khan.

¹ Landor, "Across Coveted Lands:"

II. Sights in the Interior of the City

The city is surrounded by a wall in a good state of repair, which is pierced by six gates, one of which, known as Sultani, is said to be the work of Shah Rukh. Agha Mohammed Shah entered Kerman by the Masjid Gate. The shape of Kerman is irregular, its diameter being just a mile from east to west, and a little more from north to south.

Touching it on the west side is the Ark or Fort in which the Governor-General resides; it includes the telegraphic office, barrack and arsenal.

The oldest mosque is the Masjid-i-Malik founded by the Seljuk Malik Turan Shah, A.D. 1084-1096 (A.H. 477-490). Mohammed Ibrahim the historian (sixteenth century) mentioned that he saw it standing in ruins, but since then it has been rebuilt.

The Masjid-i-Jama, known also as Masjid Muzaffer, was built in A.D. 1349 (A.H. 750) by Mobariz-ud-din Mohammed Muzaffer. There is an inscription to that effect. The third mosque of interest is the Masjid-i-Pa Minar, built by Sultan Imad-ud-din, a member of the same Muzaffer dynasty in A.D. 1390 (A.H. 793). There are said to be ninety mosques in Kerman, and six colleges, the finest of which is that founded by the Zahir-ud-Dowleh, consisting of a beautifully tiled court and entrance; it is well worth a visit. There are also about fifty hammams, and eight caravanserais, that built by the Vakil-ul-Mulk being the best.

Until 1896, when an earthquake completed its ruin, the Kuba-i-Sabz or the Green Dome was by far the most conspicuous building in Kerman. It was the tomb of the Kara Khitei dynasty, and formed part of a college known as the Madrasseh of Turkabad. The Kuba was a curious cylindrical building, about fifty feet high, with greenish-blue mosaic work outside, with rich gilding in the interior. An inscription on the wall reads:—"The work of Ustad Khoja Shukrulla and Ustad Inaitullah, son of Ustad Nizamuddin, architect of Isfahan." The date was A.D. 1242 (A.H. 640), eight years after the death of Borak Hajib, the founder of the dynasty. The tomb is now in ruins, and the doorway is locked, and more often than not, the caretaker cannot be found, but the interior can be seen quite well by going into the next door with the permission of its owners, and looking down from the roof. All that remains are two slabs of Tabriz marble over two tombs. One of the tombs, as mentioned before, is of the energetic Padshah Khatun, the daughter of Turkan Khatun, and the grand-daughter of Borak Hajib. She strangled her brother, and was herself strangled in turn, and buried in the Kuba-i-Sabz.

Not far from the Kuba-i-Sabz, in the Kucheh Ghulam-i-Hussein, is a stone exquisitely carved, with verses from the Koran in Cufic and Naskh, set in the wall of a square domed building. This building too is ornamented in the same style as the Kuba-i-Sabz, and there are fragments of blue tiles still adhering to the pillars. Underneath is a vault showing that it was a tomb. The stone is known as the Khoja Atabeg or Sang-i-Atabeg.

Touching the Ark is a fine square now used as a parade ground.

The Madrasseh Ibrahimieh is on the north side of the bazaar and is the best preserved building of that type. The college is about a hundred years old. Its courts, its walls, its rooms, its dome are most beautifully tiled all over, and it is kept in good repair and the gardens are well looked after. There is a fine lecture hall, with four strong receptacles high up in the corners

of the room, and fretwork at the windows. Four very high ventilating shafts are constructed over the buildings to keep the room cool. There is an elaborate inscription from the Koran and the words read: "Peace on Abraham"; there are other inscriptions as well. Close by and forming part of the building is a hammam with a beautifully tiled entrance, and a small door kept closed. In the first room which is domed with a central aperture for light, was a fountain playing in the centre, and platforms all round. In the second room, where there is steamy heat, are small sections round the room divided by a wall, and in each cell is a tap of cold water. The third room is hotter, and it leads to the fourth which is hotter still, but where there is a tap of cold water with which the skin is repeatedly rinsed, and made to sweat several times, to open the pores.

In the bazaars also is the mosque of Haji Agha Ali with a caravanserai, hauz and a school close by; also the caravanserai and hammam of Ganj Ali Khan, the outer door of which has picture tiles on it. There is also a square called after Ganj Ali Khan.

There is a blue-domed tomb of Mirza Hussain Khan, and another tomb of Shahzad Mohammed, a brother of the Imam Reza.

The bazaars of Kerman are vaulted and good, the vaulted bazaar being the main artery of the city, intersected about half-way by a tortuous street from north to south, and by other minor lanes, and crowded with people, donkeys, camels and mules. Here, too, carpets can be seen on the ground undergoing the process of becoming antique.

Kerman is celebrated for its cloth manufacture, carpets and felts. The cloth is of fine worsted and is used for making clothes for men and women. Kerman shawls are used for embroidered turbans and cummerbunds, and are made from fine wool. The wool is dyed and cut into short lengths, woven by children working at the looms. The design is learnt by heart as a rule, and stitches committed to memory. Occasionally a boy reads out the design.

The carpets are woven in silk and wool, and are well known for their fineness and brilliant colouring. Next to the old Kashan carpets, Kerman carpets are the prettiest in Iran, the patterns are ancient and pre-Mahomedan. In Kerman there are about a thousand looms, and the carpet-weaving is superintended by a master-weaver. Two or more boys work from a pattern which is recited. It is said these patterns have been handed down from father to son for many centuries.

The shal of Kerman is woven as a rule from wool. The work is much finer and is done by children. The usual is a fir-cone pattern with red or purple colours. Richer colours are often used in shals that are meant for robes of honour, or for the Governor's investiture at No Ruz.

Felts are made by washing and rolling masses of wool. In Iran, a room is generally covered by a huge felt; above it is a carpet. Small felts are also used during journeys, and are also suitable for bedrooms.

Abbas, and a kind of homespun known as barak, are also woven here. Kerman is also noted for its brass-work.

The population of Kerman is about seventy-five thousand, but the Zoroastrian population is estimated at about three thousand. In addition to that there is a small Hindu population of about seventy. The Hindus are British subjects, and mostly people of Shikarpur from Sind, who trade with India.

There are a few garages and caravanserais where travellers can put up. The Zoroastrian traveller cannot do better than put up with Arbab Saroshiyan Saroshiyar, a most hospitable man, who is ready to do all he can for the Parsis, and feels hurt when they do not stay with him.

Kerman, like Yezd, has got a name and is known as the Dar-ul-Amam or Abode of Peace.

In conclusion, I cannot do better than quote the Iranian couplet :—

“ On the face of the earth, there is no place like Kerman,
Kerman is the heart of the world, and we are men of heart.”

On account of its position, at the confluence of four important routes, Kerman has always been a great trading emporium. Four roads converge here—the one from Teheran and Isfahan via Yezd ; the one to Shiraz via Niriz ; the one to Duzdap via Bam ; and the caravan road to Bunder Abbas. Before going on to the Duzdap road, I shall try and describe the Kerman-Shiraz road.

CHAPTER LI

NOTE ON THE KERMAN-SHIRAZ ROAD

THE traveller from Kerman has two alternatives: to proceed to Bushire, or complete the circular tour by going back to Duzdap. The road to Shiraz via Niriz takes one and a half days, but is often infested with robbers.

The road goes from Kerman to Baghin, where early in the last century, a woman used to keep a post-house, a curious anomaly in a Mahomedan country. From Baghin the road goes through a desert plain, and through a pass known as the Gudar-i-Dukhtar between two volcanic hills. The little caravanserai of Kunukuh is passed. Here rhubarb grows wild in the valleys. The large village of Mashish comes next, with many ruins. In former times, it possessed a strong fort which was, however, destroyed by Agha Mohammed Shah, in his fight with the Zend dynasty in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The Kuh Hazar is visible in the distance. In the mountains south of Mashish is a spring, whose water bubbles up to a great height, but never overflows its basin. The noise can be heard a long distance away. The Mashish River unites with the stream irrigating Baghin to form a salt marsh at Kabutar Khan on the Yezd road.

Beyond Mashish undulating ground is encountered and then the road continues in the vicinity of the bed of a river. The village of Khan-i-Surkh is passed, with a caravanserai, having just a couple of deep recesses on either side of the arched entrance. Wild almond grows in the neighbourhood. An easy pass leading to the water parting about 8,500 feet is commenced, which enters a great valley. Here amongst a mass of volcanic conglomerate is a cave, having recesses cut in the walls, and a depression for a fire in the middle. Below it is another cavern on ground level. These caves are evidently meant for habitation, and cave dwellings are not uncommon in Iran.

Ten miles further on down a gravel slope brings the traveller to Saadatabad, the first village in the Sarjun district, and then descending about a thousand feet in sixteen miles, comes the village of Saiyadabad. The houses here are composed of sunburnt bricks. The roofs are domed, and have wind towers, which testify to the heat of the climate though it is 5,500 feet above the sea. The gardens here produce the finest pistachio nuts and pomegranates in the country, the former being a considerable article of commerce. Potatoes too are abundant. The village has about three thousand houses. Opium smoking is most prevalent here.

The chief shrine of interest in Saiyadabad is that in honour of Kamaluddin. Kamaluddin was a descendant of the Imam Reza, and was killed with a spade.

Close to Saiyadabad, near a village called Izzetabad, is the famous Kaleh-i-Sang, which rises about three hundred feet above the level of the plain. Its direction is from north-east to south-west and its length is four hundred yards, and its breadth about two hundred yards. On the northern side it is surrounded by a low wall of sun-dried bricks about fifty yards from its base. Inside it is a stone pulpit some five feet high on one side of which are four rows of Naksh inscriptions, the fifth row having been obliterated. The pulpit is a monolith, and was constructed by Sultan Ahmed Imad-ud-din of the Muzaffer dynasty of Kerman in A.D. 1387 (A.H. 789).

At the south-west and north-east angles are high walls. Access to the fort can only be got from the south-west where there is a second inscription on the right-hand side below the remains of a brick dam, and on it is written : "In this blissful abode Amir Azam Hussein-ibn-Ali constructed the Hammam." The date is A.H. 416 (A.D. 1019). The ruins of the hammam are clearly visible.

Under the north-east and highest portion of the crag is a fine grotto known as the "King's Seat," which is faced by the pulpit, and a third inscription with the name of Mohammed Shah is carved in the rock. Below it is a second grotto known as the Andarun where the ladies resided. Here the cliff is quite inaccessible.

The Kaleh-i-Sang was inhabited during the thirteenth century ; in the middle of the fourteenth century it was the prison of the Muzaffer dynasty; in the reign of Arslan Shah, it was repaired and again destroyed.

The Kaleh-i-Sang was taken by Timur's armies, but not till after plague had broken out amongst the garrison. When the district was recovered and a new capital built, it was known as Shahr Biamedi or the City of Despair. Upon the Afghan invasion, the old fort was again occupied but was captured, and the city destroyed. On the destruction of Shahr Biamedi, Saiyadabad was founded by one Mirza Sayed in its neighbourhood.

Twelve miles beyond Saiyadabad on the road to Niriz is the village of Tarabad, the country in between being rich with wheat and cotton. Two miles beyond Tarabad, is a kavir or a salt plain, about nine miles long. In winter the whole is covered with water, and dangerous to cross. This salt swamp extends to a considerable distance northwards, and slopes south-east, and is about 5,400 feet above the sea. On the other side of the kavir is the village of Khairabad, a wretched walled village at the foot of the hills with a kanat of good water, and a few willow trees.

From Khairabad the road leads up a long gentle slope between a craggy limestone hill wooded with the pistachio. The plain beyond is famous for wild asses. After crossing another small kavir, Katru comes into view. Here there is a stone terrace built round the trunk of a magnificent plane tree in a garden.

Six and a half miles from Katru, the road enters the pass known as the Dehaneh-i-Niriz. The scenery is extremely pretty, and well wooded. On the top is an open plateau three miles across, after which a descent leads to the plain and the village of Niriz.

Niriz is situated about seven miles south-east of the lake of the same name. Has gardens of fruit, walnut and chenar trees. It was the headquarters of Babism. The persecutions to which the Babis were subjected half depopulated Niriz, and the famine from which it suffered drove away many of the inhabitants.

From Niriz a caravan road (not a motor road) leads to the town of Darab. At Darab, also known as Darabjird, is a great Sassanian bas-relief of Shapur I on horseback, above a prostrate figure, conferring the crown upon Cyriadis. It is a bas-relief like those at Naksh-i-Rustam and Shapur. In addition to the bas-relief are a ruined rampart called the Kaleh-i-Darab, and an underground hall hewn in the mountain, and divided into aisles by solid pillars. This latter is called the Caravanserai Dub, but is supposed to have been a rock temple. There are no inscriptions or sculptures in it.

From Niriz the main road goes to Khir, situated at the narrowest part of the lake. From here it skirts the Daria-i-Niriz, and then turns west to Khairabad and Shiraz.

The old caravan route from Niriz was far more interesting, in that it passed through Sarbistan, Fasa and Meharlu to Shiraz. At Sarbistan and Meharlu are Achæmenian and Sassanian ruins. There are no ruins at Fasa, but only a mound of great antiquity known as Tell-i-Zohak. The ruins of Sarbistan will be described in another chapter.

CHAPTER LII

FROM KERMAN TO DUZDAP

LEAVING Kerman, the deserted city of Farmitan is passed, and the road goes between a belt of sand-hills with a firm sub-soil, till Mahun, nineteen miles from Kerman.

Mahun is celebrated for its ancient shrine, built in honour of Shah Nizmatullah, a descendant of Imam Bakr. Born in Aleppo in A.H. 730 (A.D. 1330), he was a great traveller. He is said to have spent eighty days in meditation on the summit of Demavend in mid-winter, and the same number of days on Mount Alwend, the Orontes of the Greeks. He then went to Kerbela where he lived on dust for forty days, and from there he went to Najaf and Mecca, spending seven days in the latter place. He visited Samarkand where honours were showered upon him by Timur, but as he began to get a big following, Timur sent him off to Mahun, and had a house built for him there. Not being able to rest in one place, he visited India and Shiraz. While in India, Ahmad Shah Bahmani, a King of the Deccan, sent him valuable presents, and it is said that the customs dues amounted to £70,000, but Shah Rukh remitted the amount, being constrained to do so by his wife.

The shrine at Mahun is on the main road, and in the centre of the village. In front are fine gardens and fountains; behind, opening on a street, is a large courtyard. There are some cypresses and plane trees at the entrance to the shrine. The blue domes and minars are most imposing from a distance. The courtyard inside had a tank with water, and is well shaded by cypress trees. The room which contains the tomb had a beautiful carpet, presented to the shrine by Shah Abbas. The date woven on it was A.H. 1067 (A.D. 1656). The carpet was sold and eight Kerman rugs have taken its place. On the tomb is some fine old tapestry. There are two ancient brass candelabras said to have been given to Niamatullah at Delhi. On them is the inscription "Kutab Din, son of Nasr Din." In an adjoining room there is a finely worked screen, enclosing the tomb of Shah Kaliullah, son of Sheikh Niamatullah, who died in A.H. 866 (A.D. 1461). In the large outer room are two more tombs, of Baktash Khan son of Vali Khan, and his wife Kausa Khatun, who died respectively in A.H. 310 and 311 (A.D. 923-924). In another room is the tomb of Sheikh Abdul Fath with the date A.H. 48 (A.D. 668).

In Kerman some years ago was discovered a stone with an inscription of King Darius, which was kept in the shrine at Mahun. It is an inscription in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian, on three sides of a tetragonal pyramid, and reads: "I am Darius, the great King, King of Kings, King of countries, King of this earth, son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenide."

From Mahun to Bam the road is unutterably dreary. The village of Tehrut is passed, and then Abarik where there is a hot spring which is covered in and used as a bath. The ruined fort is of considerable antiquity. Specimens of lead and zinc can be obtained from the hills to the north-west. The next village is Darazin, famous according to local legend as the spot where Faramurz, son of Rustam, was hanged by Bahman. This, however, is not true, for the defeat of Faramurz took place at Guraba, and not at Darazin. From Darazin to Bidaran the track goes down a river-bed, with modern ruins on either bank. Bidaran has a dilapidated shrine in

honour of Khoja Asghar. From Bidaran to Bam is a short run. There is a garage not far from the fort, where visitors can put up for the night.

Bam was a well-known place in Iran from the earliest days. There were four cities in the district—Bam, Rigan, Narmashir and Nisa.

Bam and Rigan were founded by Bahman, Narmashir by Ardeshir, and his wife built a dam on which Nisa depended. Bam was also the home of Haftan Bokht, Ardeshir's rival.

The story goes that the daughter of Haftan Bokht when spinning with other maidens, picked up an apple wherein she found a worm. She made a vow that if she finished her work before the others, she would spare the life of the worm. Her spinning was completed almost at once, and true to her vow, she cherished the worm. From that time the family of Haftan Bokht prospered, and he became the Ruler of the province.

According to a Pehlavi work, "The army of Haftan Bokht attacked a caravan of Ardeshir, and brought the spoils to Guzaran, a borough of Gular, where the worm had its abode. Now as regards the (worm) idolatry, it grew so powerful that 5,000 men, who composed its forces in the different frontiers of Sind assembled, and Haftan Bokht too collected his army. Ardeshir sent his army to battle with the worm, but its supporters took refuge in the hills, and falling on his army at night routed it. Ardeshir then took the field in person, and barely escaped with his life." Later on, Ardeshir in person, or one of his staff visited Guzaran in disguise, and poured molten tin down the worm's throat, and killed him. He was then able to defeat Haftan Bokht.¹

About a mile above the fort on the river is a place called Kuzaran in ruins. This Kuzaran is the same as Guzaran, and in all probability was the site of ancient Bam. One of the gates of the fortress of Bam is known as the Kut-i-Kirm.

Bam has sustained a number of sieges, and in Seljuk times it was nearly captured by damming the river.

About the end of the eighteenth century Bam was the place where Lutf Ali Khan Zend took refuge. His host, the Governor, hamstrung his horse just as he was mounting, captured Lutf Ali Khan, and gave him up to his hereditary enemy, Agha Mohammed Shah. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a force of Afghans and Seistanis besieged Bam. The garrison held out till all the ammunition was exhausted, and there was no hope. It was then that the women of Bam, headed by Banu Hussein Fatha, heated cauldrons of water and poured them on their assailants. The city was able to hold out till relief came from Kerman.

A few years later, the Agha Khan seized the fort, and was blockaded therein for nearly a year. Sickness broke out, and he had to retreat to India. It was after this that the erection of the modern town was commenced.

On the outskirts of the modern town is the Masjid-i-Hazrat Rasul, built by Abdulla Amir.

Lying at an altitude of 3,600 feet, a cool wind mitigates the summer heat. It is a big henna-producing district. The town is large, new bazaars have sprung up. Every house has a garden of its own.

¹ Sykes, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

The citadel of Bam, now completely deserted, is surrounded by a high wall of sun-dried bricks and a ditch. Inside it is the old town with its deserted bazaars. The fort itself occupies the northern end. Ascending a steep incline in the rock, and passing through a gateway, we come to another wall, some twenty yards up the hill-side, and turning to the left approach the second gateway. Below this gateway is a square surrounded by stables. A second steep incline leading to another gateway brings us to the artillery park. Another steeper passage leads from this square to a platform on which is a well about a hundred and eighty feet deep supposed to have been dug by Rustam, under orders from King Solomon! A short flight of steps leads to the summit of the fort where used to be the Governor's quarters. From the top of this fort a wonderful view can be obtained. "Looking back, Kuh-i-Hezar with its mantle of freshly fallen snow, and on each side of the valley, the hills showed up against the turquoise sky, the Shah Sawaran range to the south forming another vision of beauty. Before us lay the date groves of Bam, and the river can be traced to the north-east, the greenery of Naramshir can be seen. Far away, Bazman, loveliest of peaks, rose up grandly in solitary state, and we could not decide which was the finer of the two great giants. Bazman, however, rears its head some 9,000 feet above the plain, whereas Hazar, albeit loftier, rises but 7,000 feet above Rayin, and is surrounded by other, if lesser peaks." (*Sykes.*)

Bam is situated about eight miles from the edge of the desert. From now onwards to Duzdap, the road goes over a desert track. The track starts near the telegraph line, and goes to the village of Zaiadabad, twenty miles further on, and then goes over a sandy track for nearly a mile. Further on, it goes through a weird formation of sand-dunes and hills which look exactly like the ruins of an ancient city. Thirty-seven miles from Bam is the town of Fahreh, at an elevation of 2,300 feet. It stands close below and on the south side of the irregular hills which form the south-eastern end of the Kuh-i-Kapur range. The bed of the river is about two hundred yards wide, and the village stands on the edge of the broken ground that descends into the river. Between the village and the river is a delightful palm grove, with pomegranate trees beneath the palms. A little to the east are some tamarisks near a stream of good water, while still further is a wheat field. Water is plentiful.

On the other side of the river, opposite the village is a ziarat called Khizr, surrounded by palm trees; about a mile lower down is a ruined mud fort called Kaleh-i-Sang. Here the Kuh-i-Kapur ends, and two miles in the desert beyond to the north-west is a range of hills called the Zang-i-Ahmed.

Fahreh or Fehraj¹ is a place of great antiquity, especially if it is the Pahra of the ancients, the capital of Gedrosia, for it was here that Alexander met his elephants and baggage after marching through Baluchistan.

Until eighty years ago, Fahreh was held by the Afghans. It is the last village on the south-western side of the Lut. Here was an Indo-European Telegraph Department rest-house with a ghulam in charge.

Twenty miles beyond Fahreh on the road to Duzdap is the Mil-i-Nadiri with its base much eaten away. It is a long cylindrical tower with a height of fifty-five feet, and a base circumference of forty-three feet, and there is a staircase leading to the summit. Mohammed Ibrahim, the historian, speaks of it as follows:—"At the top of the valley, a caravanseraï, a tank, and a

¹ Now known as "Davar Panah."

bath were built of bricks, and two columns were constructed between Gurg and Fehraj, one forty gaz in height, and the other twenty-five gaz." They are built of burnt bricks, and said to have been erected by Nadir's orders to guide travellers across the desert. As a matter of fact they were erected about A.D. 1073 by Malik Kaward of Kerman, and acted as beacon-lights for travellers in this part of the desert. Nadir Shah did not arrive on the scene till nearly six hundred and fifty years afterwards.

About ten miles from the Mil, heavy sand begins, and lasts for about nine miles till after leaving Shurgaz. Water is brackish and can be got from two wells about fifteen feet below the ground. A mile after leaving Shurgaz, heavy sand is encountered, and it is here that cars get stuck, and there may be no relief for two or three days. It is advisable to go through this belt of sand with *semi-deflated* tyres. If rain has fallen previously, this precaution is not necessary.

Eleven miles from Shurgaz is another Mil-i-Nadiri completely collapsed and fallen down, and ten miles beyond is the ruined fort of Robat. It has a deep well which is dry. Five miles beyond Robat, a single telegraph line runs south from the main telegraph line to Kahurak, about a mile away in a cleft in the hills. It is not visible from the main road. Here there is a spring with brackish water. If delayed at Shurgaz, it is advisable to spend the night here, and leave for Duzdap early next morning.

Five miles from the place where the telegraph line to Kahurak branches off, is a river crossing, the east bank being marked by a cairn of stones, while the west bank has no mark. After crossing the Gurg River, the track enters a bushy marsh, and a mile beyond is Gurg with its two ruined huts. There is a brackish well six feet deep surrounded by tamarisk trees. The water is too salty, and the mosquitoes very troublesome. Copper is found in the hills. The climate is icy cold in winter and very hot in summer.

About a mile from Gurg, the track gets stony, and after passing a ruined caravanserai enters the foothills, and proceeds up a nullah towards the Afghan Pass. The road divides into two, but the left hand road should be taken. The pass known as the Gudar-i-Surkwak is narrow, and possibly the place where Krateros passed before joining Alexander in Carmania.

This pass narrows down considerably, till the Darwazeh-i-Nadiri is reached, a passage cut through the perpendicular strata that runs across, and bars the road between Gurg and Nasratabad. It is about ten and a half miles south of the village of Nasratabad Sipi. It is said that in olden times, the Darwazeh had a folding gate which was guarded by a body of armed men to protect commerce from Baluch raids, and collect customs revenue on goods passing to and from Seistan. On the Seistan side there were three towers, two of which probably supported a gateway, in which an iron door was hung. Mohammed Ibrahim says: "On the Seistan road in the valley of Kaward at four farsakhs from Isfe (Nasratabad Sipi), an iron gate was constructed and a garrison stationed. From the head of the valley to Fehraj was twenty-four farsakhs. Every three hundred paces, a pillar twice the height of a man was built in such a way that at night from each pillar a second one could be seen, so that no one could lose their way." As mentioned before, these pillars in all probability were erected by Malik Kaward, before he was strangled in A.D. 1073.

About eleven miles from the Darwazeh-i-Nadiri lies the present town of Nasratabad Sipi. It is situated in a wide valley, and is at the junction of roads coming from all directions. Both the ancient Ispi (or Isfe, said to

have been founded by Isfandiar), and the modern fort are fairly strongly built.

Nasratabad Sipi consists of a mud fort with walls thirty feet high, and fortified with nine round towers and a bala khaneh. Each face is about a hundred yards long. The remains of the fort of Ispi lie to the north of it. The place is surrounded by a tamarisk jungle. Good drinking water is obtainable, although it is supposed to contain the eggs of guinea-worm. In the neighbouring hills are two or three sulphur springs which have a reputation for the cure of skin diseases.

From Nasratabad, the track winds across the tamarisk plain, and after the ascent of the Gulabek Pass, emerges into the Garagheh plain. Here the track bifurcates. One is alongside the telegraph wires and goes to Dehaneh-i-Baghi where were the headquarters of the inspecting officer of the I.E.T.D. The Duzdap track proceeds due east, and goes straight to Garagheh where there is a ruined telegraph station with a well. Garagheh was one of Rustam's favourite hunting preserves, and it was here that Bahman when sent on an embassy to him tried to make it a success by attempting to crush him with an avalanche of rocks. Rustam, however, continued his occupation roasting a wild ass whole, until the stones were nearly on him, when he diverted them with a stick! ¹ In the Malusan range that divides Nasratabad from Garagheh, are very ancient copper mines, which were worked every now and again, until they were raided from Nushki about eighty years ago. The local name is Chihil Kura, or Forty Furnaces.

Eight miles after leaving Garagheh, the track bends and proceeds straight to the Kashika Pass, on a bearing of 120°. The ascent of the pass is gradual, and the length is about five miles. Six miles beyond this pass, the track joins the main Meshed-Zahidan (Duzdap) road. Two miles further on is Zahidan (Duzdap). If the traveller starts from Zahidan (Duzdap) and follows the itinerary mapped out in the book, he will thus have done a circular tour of Iran, and visited all the important cities and towns, except Seistan. The journey from Zahidan (Duzdap) to Seistan, and the sights of Seistan will be described in the next part.

¹ Sykes, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia."

PART II

CHAPTER LIII

ZAHIDAN (DUZDAP)¹ TO SEISTAN

THE road from Zahidan (Duzdap) to Seistan follows the Meshed road as far as Dorai, about eight miles beyond Hormuk, and then branches off to the right (or the east), and becomes a mere track, the junction of the two roads being marked by a cairn of stones. After passing a ruined fort called the Kaleh-i-Surkh, the road goes on a flat level plain as far as the banks of the Sheila. This wide and deep river-bed is usually dry, but occasionally holds pools of brine. The channel is about a hundred yards wide in places, and its course is tortuous. All along the watercourse extensive sediments of salt line the edge of the water and higher up, near the mountains to the south-west, the water is said to be bridged over by salt deposits several inches thick. The Sheila proceeds between high river banks in some places as much as sixty feet high, along a tortuous channel in a south-easterly direction, enters Afghan territory, losing itself in the south-western Afghan desert, known as the Zirreh. When the Helmand overflows, and the Hamun is overfull, the waters of the latter find a way into the Sheila, and the united waters swell the Zirreh in Afghanistan.

After crossing the Sheila, we come to a place consisting of domed houses on an artificial mound. This is the district originally watered from the Helmand by the Rud-i-Hauzdar.

Girdi Chah (as it is called) is about half-way between Zahidan (Duzdap) and Seistan. Its altitude is 2,200 feet, and here is a rest-house belonging to His Britannic Majesty's Consulate, Seistan and Kain. The water in Girdi is undrinkable, and is thick with salt and dirt. The post station has a high wall round it with two rooms for their sawars, and one adjoining it for their families. There are four watch-towers at the corners of the wall of sun-dried bricks, and a path at the top to go from one tower to another.

Three miles from Girdi are the ruins of Ramrod, and arrangements can be made to go there on camels. Pottery and old Mahomedan coins can occasionally be found there. The ruins of Ramrod are modern, although the place may occupy an ancient site. Nowhere in the vicinity is there any trace of a large city or even a town having existed, or even any legend to this effect. The present fort is situated at the southern end of the Seistan basin, but there are no signs of any towns of considerable size between it and the Sheila. Modern Ramrod was deserted owing to the failure of Malik Bahram Khan's canal.

Leaving Girdi, the track gets very bad again for a few miles and nothing is seen except sand and tamarisk shrubs. Eventually it emerges on a flat plain for ten miles, and here there are some old interesting ruins. Like the usual Iranian way, they are "qadeem," (i.e., old) and hence they belong to Rustam, the great Iranian hero.

A little off the main road (the car can go right up to them) and on the road from Mukhi-Surkh to Seistan, are the ruins known as Qasr-i-Rustam (Rustam's Castle). The ruins are of comparatively recent date, and the

¹ Duzdap is now known as Zahidan. In order not to confuse it with the ruins of Zahidan, I put the word in brackets.

fort is in ruins. The interior contains domed houses, and many of the domes have fallen in, and the houses broken down. The walls too have crumbled in parts. They are the ruins of Kunder. Kunder was never more than a village enclosed by a wall and surrounded by a ditch. The latter, like the one at Hauzdar (Kaleh-i-Rustam) was intended more as a protection against floods than an enemy, as all these ruins are on a hard level plain of clay.

Proceeding from the Qasr-i-Rustam towards the Seistan road, we come across round circular ruins on a mound, one about a mile to the north of the other. The first one is fifteen to twenty feet high and three hundred feet in diameter. Part of the circular walls have fallen down now, and the insides are filled with clayey mud. These are known as the Akhurs of Rustam, i.e., stables for Rustam's charger Raksh. The legend is that these places were filled right up with fodder, and Rustam's horse was let loose inside, and ate up the whole lot! In reality, they are old Zoroastrian Towers of Silence, now unused and in ruins. Between the two Akhurs is a fairly ancient ruin called the Pa'Kash-i-Rustam; tradition says that this was the peg to which the heel ropes of Rustam's charger used to be fastened.

Further on and close to the main Seistan road, about a few yards to the left is Hauzdar Fort, also known as Kaleh-i-Rustam or the Fort of Rustam. The walls of the fort are still in a good state of preservation. There are four high towers to the north, the two central towers near the gate being close to each other, and more massive than the corner ones, which are circular, and tapering towards the summit. The wall is about thirty feet high and castellated. The gate, protected by an outer screen, is to the east, and is two-storeyed, and leads directly into the main street of the city. There is only one gate.

Access from one tower to another is obtained by a path like a narrow platform, which can be seen all round about half-way up inside the wall. There are no steps to reach the summit of the towers, but merely inclined planes.

On entering the city gate, one encounters the quarters of the Chief—a three-tiered domed structure, with annexes on its western and southern sides. Round the quarters is a wall, into which a large entrance has been cut, leading to the dwelling. The various floors are reached by a series of tunnelled passages on inclined planes. The room on top has a dome, and inside it there is a raised portion to sit upon. The ceiling is ornamented with a frieze. The room has four windows, and a number of slits in the north wall. There are a number of receptacles, some of which have been used for burning lights. From the top an excellent view of the town inside the fort, and the desert beyond can be obtained. The whole is in a state of good preservation. Five doors lead into other rooms, which have mostly fallen down, their side walls alone remaining. All the ceilings are vaulted.

On the south-east corner is a compound, occupying about a quarter of the area of the town. Here there are structures with domes, the domes having fallen in on the north side, while the southern sides are still intact. This is due to the action of the north winds.

On the ground floor, considerably below the level of the street outside, is a long room. In the north wall is a ventilating arrangement which keeps the room cool. They are slits in the wall, with boxed-in channels where a great draught is set in by the inflow of air. There are a great many receptacles in the lower portion of the wall. Next to this, is a big hall

with domes, about eighteen feet high inside, but collapsed in places. There are doors on the south and north, and eleven receptacles constructed for lamps.

All round the Chief's quarters, the city wall is double, and strengthened with outside battlements. The same thing can be seen on the west and north sides. The city wall is irregular, and the moat outside has got filled with sand.

On the north side opposite the palace (Chief's quarters) is a large unroofed stable, showing a number of mangers.

In the western portion of the city, there are any amount of domed roofs mostly fallen in on the northern side. The houses under the shelter of the northern wall are in the best preservation, and are mostly quadrangular in shape, with a low door on the south side. The larger ones have ventilating channels with perforated slits in the north wall, but all the houses are small.

The wall is constructed in successive tiers, each of less than a man's height, and each with a path extending all along, so that it can be remanned in time of attack. The towers are higher than the wall. The city gate is of great strength, the two front towers being strengthened inwardly by a third quadrangular tower.

A few hundred feet to the south outside the city wall is part of a wall still standing. It stands on the top of the section of a vault. The fragment of the wall is about fifty feet high, and a good bit more of it is buried by the sand. It had strong supports at the base. Tradition says that it was the stable of Rustam's horse. Another version says it was an execution place.

Kaleh-i-Rustam or Hauzdar Fort is comparatively modern. It was at one time the property of the Rais tribe, but the Sarabandi Chief having gained a footing by marriage, seized the fort and dispossessed its previous owners, most of whom were probably killed.

Hauzdar is a modern fort enclosing within its walls a small town. A gate to the south and one to the north afforded means of egress, and it was surrounded by a ditch some fifty feet in width. Inside the ditch which is now merely a shallow depression, there are the marks of two or three wells which supplied the town with water when the canals were not running and even when they were full as the watercourses were further away from the walls. To the north of the fort are some broken enclosures which mark the positions of the gardens. To the south of the fort is an extensive cemetery, with graves above ground, mainly single ones, and beyond the latter is the probable site of the city of Rustam with only a crumbling ruin of a small fortalice, and an ancient Tower of Silence on the end of an isolated block of kim, about a mile to the south of the former. In the city of Rustam, Rustam's son Faramurz was killed by Bahman.

To the east and south-east of Kaleh-i-Rustam, on the right-hand side of the road, and about three miles from it, but accessible by car, are most extensive ruins—the ruins of Machi. The city is in a complete state of dilapidation, only the walls of the houses remaining. The palace too is in a state of decay, a few rooms and the walls being intact. Some of the inscriptions in the Machi ruins are dated, but there was no date earlier than A.H. 1130 (A.D. 1717). In one were the words “ Mir Ja'afir Khan Walad (illegible) Khan der Sal 1130 ” (A.D. 1717).

Leaving Kaleh-i-Rustam, the road goes over undulating country to Lutk. The old fort of Lutk is now in ruins, but a new village has sprung up a mile to the east of it. Two miles from the modern Lutk village is Sehkoha Fort, which will be described later on.

To the north of Sehkoha, away from the main road is another ruined fort, known as Kaleh-i-Sam. It was supposed to have been built by the grandfather of Rustam, but the ruins are comparatively modern. The fort had to be abandoned on account of lack of water, the Helmand having changed its course.

From Lutk to Nasratabad (Seistan), a distance of twenty-four miles, the road is extremely bad. Several water channels have to be crossed, and the bridges over them are in a state of dilapidation. Six miles from Lutk is the big village of Daulatabad, and six miles from there is Chilling. Chilling is a large village of three hundred and fifty houses with a square fort, and one ruined tower in the middle forming a landmark. The village is of very ancient date, but the fort was commenced by Mohammed Reza Khan, and finished by Sardar Ali Khan. It is situated on the banks of the principal canal which draws off the waters of the Rud-i-Seistan for irrigating purposes, and which supplies the surrounding district with water. This canal passes by Deshtak, flows past Chilling in the direction of the Kuh-i-Khwaja, emptying whatever water is remaining in the bed of the lake. Then follows Hazrat Abbas, and eventually we come to the river called the Naurab which takes in the overflow water from the Rud-i-Seistan. At certain times of the year, generally between July and December, the river is dry and cars can go along the bed of the river. When the river is full, the car and passengers are taken on tutins². The bridge built here by the East Persian Cordon in 1919 is completely broken. Three miles from the Naurab is Nasratabad,¹ the capital of the province of Seistan. It is scarcely known as Nasratabad, everybody calling it Seistan.

¹ Now known as "Shehr Zabul."

² See illustration on page 336.

CHAPTER LIV

HISTORY OF SEISTAN

THE word Seistan is derived from Sagastan, the country of the Sagan or the Sacæ, the Scythians who came down here from the north in the third century A.D., occupied this place for about a hundred years, and were eventually expelled by Varahran II (A.D. 275-292).

The country from remote times was known as Nimroz. It is also supposed to be the residence of Jamshed. Here Rustam, the great Iranian hero, was born, who fought against Afrasiab, and the people of Turan, and with the jins and demons of Mazanderan. In the Shah Nameh, Seistan is the home of Sam and Zal, the grandfather and father of Rustam, who were so instrumental in fighting on the side of the Kaianian monarchs against their enemies, and who seated many of the Kaianian Kings on the throne. During the latter years of Rustam's life, the Iranian capital was shifted from Seistan to Fars. Whether Rustam and his family were purely legendary or not is a difficult question to decide, but I think there must have been a family who did some of the deeds that were attributed to them, and that there must be a substratum of truth and not all legend.

In the time of Alexander the Great, Seistan was known as Drangiana. In all probability he passed this way on his march to India, but on his return journey, while going from Gedrosia (Makran) to Carmania (Kerman) himself, he sent a column under Krateros through Arachiota and Drangiana.

In Sassanian times, Seistan was a great centre of Zoroastrian worship, and here came the last sovereign of that dynasty, Yezdezird III, fleeing from the Arabs, on his way to Merv.

In the ninth century A.D., a robber, Yakub bin Leith, founded the Saffari or Coppersmith's dynasty, and extended his power from Shiraz to Kabul. The empire collapsed in the next century when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded the place. In the tenth century, El-Istakhri visited Seistan and spoke of its famous windmills, and described the place as a country of populous cities, abundant canals and great wealth.

In A.D. 1362 Timur invaded Seistan at the head of a thousand horsemen, captured many villages, but was eventually wounded in the hand and foot, and compelled to retreat to Makran. By some historians, this was supposed to be the wound that made him lame, and which earned for him the name of Timur Lang (Timur the **Lame**) or Tamerlane as he is known to Europeans.

In 1383, Timur, after massacring people wholesale in Khorassan, invaded Seistan and carried Zaranj in Seistan by assault. He then marched on Zahidan, the capital. After a desperate resistance and (it is reported) by treachery, Zahidan fell. The whole of the garrison was put to the sword, and all the loot sent off to Samarkand. The great dam on the Helmand was also destroyed, and all this fertile country was turned into a ruinous waste. It has never risen since that day.

The Sefavi dynasty repeopled it under the local rule of a man who claimed descent from the ancient Kaianian family.

In 1722, during the siege of Isfahan by the Afghans, Malik Mohammed, the reigning prince, came to the rescue with 10,000 followers, but on being given Khorassan by the Afghans, he left the city to its fate, and was

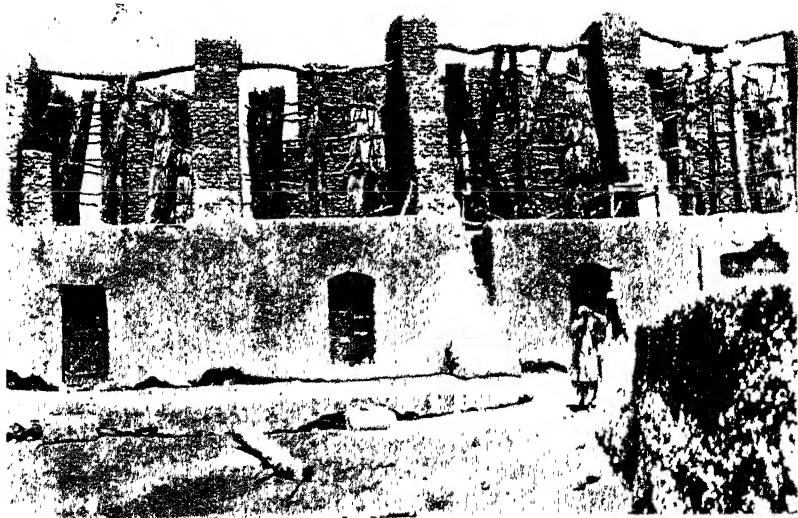
eventually captured by Nadir Shah in Meshed. His heirs sustained a seven years' siege on the Kuh-i-Khwaja in Seistan, but were eventually forced to yield, and Seistan passed into the hands of Nadir Shah, and it remained there till his death in 1747. After his death, it passed into the hands of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the founder of the Durani Empire of Afghanistan, and it remained in the hands of his successor till A.D. 1793. In A.D. 1833, Seistanis took part in the defence of Herat against the Iranians, but in A.D. 1857, Ali Khan, the local ruler, elected to come under Iranian rule, and was given a royal bride, the Shah's cousin and the daughter of Bahram Mirza, who was escorted to Sehkoha, his stronghold. He was, however, besieged and killed by one of his nephews, Taj Mohammed, and his wife was wounded. Taj Mohammed though at first allowed to retain the chiefship, was later on summoned to Meshed and imprisoned, but escaped and died in Quetta.

After this the Iranian Government gradually took possession of Seistan and started occupying forts across the Helmand, but came into conflict with Afghanistan. The British Government agreed to arbitrate between the two, and the Seistan Mission followed.

The present Governor of Seistan is a descendant of the Amirs of Kain, mentioned in Chapter II.



A TUTIN ON THE NAURAB, SEISTAN.



WINDMILL, SEISTAN (SHEHR ZABUL).

CHAPTER LV NASRATABAD

وفا از سیستانی هست از کاشانی نجو

("Wafa az Seistani, himmat az Kashani naju.")

("Don't look for fidelity in a Seistani or courage in a Kashani.")
Iranian saying.

NASRATABAD, also known as Sher-i-Nasriya,¹ and often called "Seistan," is the present capital of Seistan and is a steadily growing city. The main street now is the Khiaban-i-Pahlavi, a big broad street full of shops, and with water channels on either side. Other equally broad streets run parallel to it and intersect it at right angles. The main street of eight years ago, where the chief offices used to be, was very narrow.

The bazaars are not worth a visit. They are in narrow, tortuous lanes. Russian and German goods preponderate.

The old fort built by the Amir of Kain is in a dilapidated state. It consists of an enclosure a quarter of a mile square, surrounded by thirty-foot walls of considerable thickness with towers at close intervals. Dilapidated steps on the eastern side lead up to the top. Running all round is a protected way which is loopholed, and close to the entrance is a deep ditch or moat. It is filled up in other places. The inside is in a ruinous condition.

The British Consulate is situated in the northern side of the city, and to the north-west of it are the cavalry and infantry barracks. To the south-east of it is the Russian Consulate-General,² situated opposite an extensive old graveyard, which is also used as an open bazaar, in modern times. There used to be a branch of the Imperial Bank of Iran, but that branch has disappeared now, and has been replaced by the new National Bank of Iran, under the charge of an Austrian. There is also a cinema started in 1928, by the enterprising Governor of Seistan, Mohammed Reza Khan Khozeima, known as Samsam-ud-Dowleh³. In this remote corner of Iran, thanks to the Governor, is a private electric plant of his, which supplies the whole town with electricity.

In the ruined quarter of Husseinabad, in the north-east part of the city, are the windmills characteristic of Seistan, and mentioned as being present by Al-Istakhri in the tenth century A.D. The motive-wheel which revolves in a horizontal position, is encased in high walls on three sides, leaving a slit on the north side, from whence the prevalent winds of Seistan blow. The walls are so cut as to catch as much wind as possible, which coming with great force through the slit, sets the wheel in motion. The wheel is made coarsely of reeds tied in six bundles fastened together by means of cross arms of wood, and revolves easily on a long iron pivot, and once set in motion attains a high speed.

The flour mill has two storeys. The motive-wheel occupies the whole of the top floor, while down below on the ground floor, attached to its pivot is the grinding stone. The wheat to be ground, flows into a central aperture in this stone from a suspended vessel, a system of strings and ropes acting as a brake on the action of the upper wheel to control its speed, and others which allow the grain to fall uniformly, or prevent its flow as needs be.

¹ Now known as "Shehr Zabul." ² Now abolished.

³ He is no longer Governor now.

The houses of the Seistanis are designed to suit the climate. The houses are all built of mud with domes, and have ventilators facing towards the north. Every house is provided with ventilators the shafts of which pass into the dwelling rooms between double walls. The entrances are placed in the side of the building which faces the south-east, the opposite direction to that from which the wind blows. The houses used by the wealthier classes have a lofty *aiwan*, and from this main hall, doors, as low and narrow as possible, give off on either side into large vaulted rooms.

The ventilators of the houses are a conspicuous feature. The ordinary type of ventilator in Seistan is a cowl or hatch-like opening narrower than its height. The narrow opening faces the north, or a little to the east of north. This is done to break the force of the wind, for if it blew directly down the shaft of the ventilator when a gale was raging, the contents of the room below would be scattered all over the place. There is always a rush of air down the shaft, and this is regulated by building up the mouth of the ventilator to suit the weather at the time.

The houses of the lower classes are small. They are side by side in a courtyard, and each has an arched entrance. On the windward side in each is a false window, filled with a heavy masonry lattice with small apertures for light and air, and the draught is regulated by plugging the openings with pieces of paper, and with lumps of wet clay. When the weather gets colder, greater number of openings are closed, and when summer returns they are gradually opened again.

Every village in the province of Seistan has one or two gardens on the outskirts, surrounded by high walls, to protect the trees from the ravages of the wind. Inside, all kinds of fruit are cultivated, grapes, pomegranates, melons, etc. The garden is like an oasis in a wide desert expanse. Every village too has a *kadkhuda*.¹

The character of the Seistanis is exactly what has been mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. They are unreliable, and fidelity and honesty cannot be expected from them. This is chiefly due to the use of opium to which both men and women are addicted. Opium is also given to children to keep them quiet. The Seistanis are very superstitious, and in the province there are numerous *ziarats* or shrines to which they resort, especially on festivals.

The climate of Seistan on the whole is not bad. The winters are very pleasant, and in the summer the temperature seldom, if ever, exceeds 110° F. in the shade. Fleas abound in the winter and sand-flies in the summer. During the summer months from May to September, the Wind of 120 Days (*Bad-i-Sad-o bist ruz*) prevails over a tract of country over a hundred miles in width. It is a sand-blast, the wind sometimes travelling over forty miles an hour, and driving before it clouds of dust and gravel. This wind has an effect on the buildings of the town. Walls of earth and domes are very soon destroyed by wind and damp. Walls at right angles to the wind are completely broken down, while those parallel to the force of the wind are slowly eaten away. On plateaux, there are rifts many yards long, and about fifteen or more feet deep, the sand having been taken by the wind to form sand-hills round the ruins. Yet, this dust that causes so much havoc on dry land, causes no discomfort on irrigated land, and the loss by erosion is compensated by the gain in silt. This wind of 120 days blows from the north-north-west, and is a constant feature of Seistan, and tempers the heat considerably. Those who can afford it, have *khar khanehs* or camel's thorn compartments built in the northern doorway. The camel's thorn is about four feet deep. Coolies swish buckets of water on them all day. The wind trying to force its way through them causes evaporation and cooling of the rooms. The *khar khanehs* with the *badgirs* on windy days can keep the room temperature

¹ A Chief.

between 70° and 80° F., when the outside temperature is over 100° F. Khar khanehs have to be changed every fortnight, otherwise a decomposing smell will be emitted by them. Occasionally on account of the cool atmosphere, snakes come out of their holes, and lodge near the khar khanehs.

A characteristic feature of the wind is that the sky is clear, and the stars as a rule not obscured. It usually comes on after a brief spell of calm weather, and the first signs are the horizontal bars of dust low down on the horizon. As a rule, they occur after a rise of temperature, and after the wind stops, the temperature often goes down considerably. In August, usually in the fourth week, a curious phenomenon, called the *Dud-i-Seistan* (Smoke of Seistan), takes place. It is a pall of smoke that collects over the inhabited area as soon as the upper atmospheric strata begin to cool. When that is seen, the worst of the hot weather is over, as a rule. The extraordinary part is that the 120 days' wind stops in September and from then onwards to the middle of October, it can be very hot and unpleasant. In fact, very often September and early October are the hottest months in Seistan.

The wind of 120 days is in many ways a blessing to Seistan. It not only minimizes the heat and purifies the atmosphere, but gets rid of the myriads of insects that infest the place in the summer, and also the insects of the jungles and the swamps. Sand-flies are about the least endurable, but on windy days they never give any trouble.

The diseases of Seistan are diseases due to wind and dust. Conjunctivitis, corneal ulcers and opacities are quite common. Trachoma and cataract too are very common, especially the former disease.

A type of oriental sore (*Leishmaniasis*) known as Seistan sore, or *Dana-i-daghi* attacks people on the face or open parts of the body. It begins with irregularly shaped pustules that come to suppuration and burst, and last for months, extending on the surface of the skin, and leaving an unsightly scar behind.

Skin diseases due to dirt and dust, and venereal complaints are most common. The natives *smoke* "shingraf" (or mercury) for syphilis. Digestive complaints, uncontrollable diarrhoea are extremely common, as well as sore throats.

Malaria is practically unknown, the principal cases being those imported from Zahidan (*Duzdap*).

A new Iranian Hospital of six beds has been recently opened in *Shehr Zabul* but medicine is in an elementary state, and very little surgery is done by the Iranian doctor. The medicines prescribed are chiefly herbal medicines. I affix a prescription for rheumatism given by one of the doctors:—

Pepper	..	4	miscals ¹
Seeds of henbane	..	4	"
Saffron	..	2	"
Opium	..	2	"
Rock parsley	..	1	"
Parsley seed	..	1	"
Spikenard	..	1	"
Indian spikenard	..	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
Benzoin	..	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
Dracunculus	..	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
Euphorbia	..	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
Balsam	..	2	"
Honey	..	20	"

All to be powdered and mixed with honey.

Sig.—One gram to be taken in the morning and one gram in the evening.

¹ 1 miscal=24 grains.

The following remedy for hæmorrhoids, and for one or two other diseases is supposed to be extraordinarily efficient, and a quick cure is guaranteed :—

A wild-pig has to be caught and brought to the house. An operation is performed on the renal area of the pig, and the area exposed. The pig must on no account be killed. The patient sufferer sits over the exposed wound of the pig, and every time the pig draws a breath he pulls a hæmorrhoid out. A complete cure is supposed to take place within 15 minutes. It is a remedy recommended by the principal priest, and the Mullahs.

Seistan is supposed to be an excellent place for duck and bird shooting. The following are the birds that can be found in Seistan¹ :—

- (1) *Kaftar-i-Sail* (The Pigeon of the Rapids).—White breast and back, grey wings, beak fine and white. Lives on the banks of canals and rivers and catches fish. When twenty or thirty collect together, it is a sure sign that rapids or floods will come in two or three days. It comes to the province the month before No Ruz.
- (2) *Saka or Water Carrier* (Seistani name “*Camao*”).—White body, very large long legs, long beak, long neck. Under its throat is a large bag, which contains much water. Comes from Astrakhan.
- (3) *Murghabi Andak* (Seistani “*Sabz Gardan*”).—The common wild-duck.
- (4) *Koh* (Swan).—Comes from Astrakhan and remains in Seistan. Lays its eggs near the water. Somewhat rare.
- (5) *Taghalak* (The Grebe).—Continually diving.
- (6) *Teal*.—Wild geese.
- (7) *Chaor, Black*.—The common coot. To be seen in myriads.
- (8) *Mahi Marwarid*.—The pearl or white fish.

According to the same author, the following serpents are to be found in Seistan :—

- (1) *Shatur Mar*.—One to two yards in length. Ashy green colour. Not very venomous.
- (2) *Mar Khuni* (Blood Snake).—Half a yard in length. Has a scarlet line from head to tail on an ashy ground. White belly. If it stings anyone, blood is said to issue from all the extremities.
- (3) *Mar Ja'afari*.—Flame colour with red. Spotted. Half a yard in length. Bite instantaneously fatal. Derives its name from its having been given an asylum in the sleeve of Imam Jafar Sadik (sixth Imam) when pursued by another snake. As soon as the pursuing snake was driven away, the sheltered one bit the Prophet.
- (4) *Pardah Mar*.—Half a yard in length, very thick round the body. Dark green colour. Sits on its tail and springs ten or twelve yards at a time after its prey, men or animals. Its spring has force enough to knock a man down.
- (5) *Shikari Mar*.—White ground with black spots. Lives on herbs and shrubs, and catches small birds. Not fatal.—Half a yard long.

¹ Goldsmith, “*Perso-Afghan Boundary Commission*.”

- (6) *Khuk Mar*.—Short and thick, thick tail, bite instantaneously fatal, dark blue colour.
- (7) *Dosak Mar*.—Has two heads one at each end, one larger than the other. Grey colour. Half yard long. Acts with the larger head. Very rare. Not very poisonous.
- (8) *Sag Mar*.—Thick body, half a yard in length, pursues men. Has a white belly and grey back.

The classification is unscientific, and I am unable to identify these snakes, especially the *Dosak Mar*. During my stay in Seistan, I saw four snakes, one of which was an Echis Viper (*Echis carinata*), and the other were of the order *Colubridæ*, but none of the Krait family. I believe the Horned Viper too is found in the desert.

CHAPTER LVI

FROM SEISTAN TO ZAHIDAN

AN Arab poet wrote.—“ O Seistan ! May the clouds refuse their beneficent rain, may ruins and the desert cover thy soil ! In winter thou art a place of suffering and misfortune : in summer a mass of serpents and insects. God has created thee as a punishment to men, and has made thee a hell.”

The Iranian calls Seistan what the British Tommy says of Basra, but as it is indecent to mention the latter, it is equally impolitic to mention what the Iranian says about Seistan. Suffice it to say that when Iranian officials are sent here from Teheran, they regard it more or less as a punishment duty.

Travelling in Seistan differs from travelling in the rest of Iran, inasmuch as there are no motor roads, and all the sightseeing has to be done on horseback. A traveller from India once came to Seistan, and despite good advice insisted on riding a donkey instead of a horse. He found he could not ford the rivers, and was so shaken in a three-day travel that he refused to do any more and returned straight back to Bombay ! It is not always pleasant to ride either. There is very little greenery except near the villages, and most of the time one is going over sand and desert where the wind blows during the summer months, and there are sand-storms all day long. Moreover, water channels and rivers have to be crossed, and though there are temporarily erected bridges over most of the former, the latter have none, and have to be forded. There are no places where one can comfortably spend the night outside Shehr Zabul. The Qalantars and Maliks of the different places in the villages are hospitable men, and are willing to put one up, but unless one is used to Iranian ways and customs, it is advisable to take tent equipment and camp out if possible, or return to Shehr Zabul the same day, whenever possible, but the latter cannot always be done on long-distance rides.

The first excursion that can be made from Seistan (Shehr Zabul) is to Zahidan. This excursion can be done on horses, in a day. Six miles to the north-east of Seistan (Shehr Zabul) is the village of Bunjar, the biggest trading village in the province, and the residence of the Imam Jume'h, the next holy man to the Head Priest at Shehr Zabul. In the big square in Bunjar, Passion Plays are rehearsed and acted during Moharram time. This village and neighbourhood supply Shehr Zabul entirely with wood, and very largely with food. There is much cultivated land here, the ground being intersected by numerous natural and artificial water channels.

The next village beyond Bunjar is Iskail. Most of its buildings are two-storeyed, and have domed roofs. A tower stands above the height of all the other buildings. The town is exceptionally nice and clean, and the present Qalantar is a very hospitable man. A qalantar, by the way, is a landowner, and the name is taken by each of the family as he succeeds to the possession of these villages, lands and rights. Close by the modern village of Iskail is a ruined fort, which was the residence of the present qalantar's grandfather, and the place where he was murdered. The story is a particularly sad one. Near his own residence he had built a handsome guest-house in front of his dwelling in order to put up and entertain his friends, and it was on the steps of his guest-house that he was killed. In 1891, a man called Mahommed Hussein Khan, an Afghan refugee, came to live in Bunjar, bringing with him a Sigah¹ wife, her mother and a child. Short-

¹ A temporary marriage so common in Iran.

ly after his arrival he left his family in Bunjar, and went on a pilgrimage to Meshed. No news was received of him for a very long time, and he never sent any money to his wife. When the poor woman's patience was exhausted she wrote to him that if he did not return by a certain date and answer her letter she should consider herself divorced from him. He replied that she was at liberty to consider herself divorced from the date of receipt of the letter, and requested her to send her mother with his child to Meshed.

It is reported that during the absence of Mohammed Hussein, the qalantar Mir Abbas had an intrigue with the lady. As soon as the news of her husband's letter was received, he forcibly removed her from Bunjar, and made her marry him at Iskail.

But the lady was a Sunni, and the qalantar a Shiah, and certain religious obstacles had to be overcome before the marriage could be valid. Moreover, a marriage like that would be deeply resented by the relatives of both parties.

In 1900, the lady's brother, a native of Girisk near Kandahar, annoyed with his sister for marrying a Shiah, and a man who was not an Afghan, came to Iskail with the object of taking vengeance on her husband. He entered the service of the qalantar, assuring him of great affection and devotion, and the qalantar on his part, treated him most generously, and gave him employment.

On the night of September 19, 1901, the qalantar had guests in the Durbar building, among whom was the Afghan. The latter left the room before the qalantar and hid himself near the entrance. When the qalantar came out and was descending the steps, the Afghan pulled out his rifle and shot him in the head, killing him instantly. He then went into the Andarun to kill his sister, but having her suspicions, she had barricaded herself in. An alarm was given, and the murderer had to make his escape across the Afghan border, about fourteen miles distant from Iskail.

It was said that the murderer had been sheltered by the Afghan Governor of Chakansur. The Governor of Seistan demanded the extradition of the assassin, but that was refused. The Afghan Governor was then accused of screening the murderer. The relations between Iran and Afghanistan became very strained.

The Afghan Governor suggested that five Iranian officials together with twenty Afghans should search his district, but the offer was declined, and Iranian and Afghan soldiers were posted along the border, on both sides of the river. Eventually the affair was satisfactorily settled.

There is a legend that the Iskail family contributed eighty warriors who took part in the wars against the children of Ali, and consequently they labour under a curse. None of the family can be interred in a cemetery with orthodox Mahomedans, for the earth is said to reject their unhallowed remains. They must be buried apart from others. The female members are supposed to have special bodily defects.¹

From Iskail, a track goes direct to Zahidan, but it is worth while making a slight detour and going almost due east to the solitary tower standing in the desert known as the Mil-i-Kasimabad. The village of that name is about two miles away from the Mil, and lies east-north-east of Iskail.

This tower stands upon the low ridge on which Zahidan was built, and it is about four and a half miles to the north-west of the northern wall of

¹ Landor, "Across Coveted Lands."



MIL-I-KASIMABAD (SEISTAN).



MIL-I-KASIMABAD, SHOWING THE EROSION BY THE
120 DAYS' WIND,

Zahidan. It is so called because the village of Kasimabad is closer to the minaret than any other village in Seistan. The tower is now broken, and on the west side there is a rift of about twenty feet below the summit. The bricks lower down have been pulled out by the Seistanis, and the entrance too is now merely a hole, the arched doorway having been wilfully defaced.

The tower appears to have stood at the southern angle of a courtyard, with apartments all round it, which extended to the western side of the courtyard as well. On the north-west side of the courtyard were buildings of much greater size than the apartments round the base of the minaret. All these buildings were built with sun-dried brick or "pise." Between the courtyard and the minaret with its chambers was a wall.

To the north of the ruins around the minaret, traces of ancient buildings can be seen, and pottery and baked brick are found. A little north-west of the minaret, and about a mile distant from it, is a mound formed by the ruins of a fortified dwelling, perhaps the residence of the Governor of that day. About a mile beyond this mound is the modern village of Kasimabad. The fortified dwelling occupied the north-western side of an open courtyard, and round the interior of the latter were a series of quarters for the servants. These were two storeys high, and beyond it at a distance of about twenty feet or more, was an outer wall, which probably was continued all round the walls of the courtyard. The whole of the premises occupied an outside area of about 4,000 square feet. Near this mound are exposed plinths of foundations of baked brick.

The highest part of the minaret is seventy-five feet above the present ground level. The Mil is a cylindrical tower standing over a plinth eighteen feet square, the shaft tapering towards the summit, the diameter of the tower at the bottom being eighteen feet. The plinth is a foot or so above the heap of debris which surrounded this building and the adjoining ruins, and which forms a mound several feet high around them. The bricks of the plinth are laid upright and form an ornamental course. The entrance faces the north, and from the right of it a narrow and spiral staircase ascends the inside of the tower making two complete turns in a height of about fifty-seven feet. The staircase is now broken down in parts, and it is impossible to get to the summit. At the bottom there was a solid pillar, but above this support which did not extend more than ten feet above the ground, the stairs were built out of the wall.

On the outside are two broad bands containing an inscription in Arabic characters. The letters are formed of baked bricks, the height being about one and a half feet. Above the top lettering, the minaret is richly decorated. The bricks are laid in headers and stretchers and the cement is the famous Saruj, the thin layers of cement between the bricks being harder than the bricks themselves.

The inscriptions contain the names of two of the former Maliks of Seistan. The lower inscription bears the name of Taj-ud-din Abu'l Fazl-i-Nasr, and the upper is that of his great-grandson Taj-ud-din Harab. Taj-ud-din Abu'l Fazl-i-Nasr reigned eighty years, and died in A.H. 559, leaving the minaret unfinished, which was completed by his great-grandson Taj-ud-din Harab who died in A.H. 612. The minaret was presumably built as a pious work, and must have formed part of a religious establishment preceding it. The buildings included a school, and a masjid, the latter of which was probably at the north-western end of the courtyard. If there was a caravanserai and a tank as well, it is probably buried by the sand.

The orientation of the whole of these buildings is the same as that of the city of Zahidan.

The action of the wind of 120 days on the Mil is very marked. The portion exposed to the wind is in much better order than the portion on the opposite side of the column. The parts exposed to the east and south to the heat of the sun have suffered greater damage, even the lettering and architectural detail having been disintegrated to some extent. The sand too on account of its grinding effect has smoothed the surface of the building below a certain height, but this is not so marked on the upper part of the minaret.

A few hundred yards to the east of the Mil runs the Niatak River, a branch of the Rud-i-Perian, the main continuation of the Helmand. It is always full, and before proceeding to Zahidan, which lies four miles to the south-east of the Mil, it would be just as well to give the horses as much water as they want to drink, for in Zahidan there is no water, and if the visitor intends to return to Shehr Zabul by the shorter and the desert route, there will be very little water on the road for a distance of ten miles.

CHAPTER LVII

THE RUINS OF ZAHIDAN

ZAHIDAN at one time was the capital of Seistan. Tradition states that this town had existed four hundred and twenty years, when it was destroyed by Timur, and this would place the completion of the capital in A.H. 365 in the reign of Khalaf-ibn-i-Ahmed, who had been besieged for seven years in his capital, before he was finally subdued by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. The old capital was Zaranj, and the frequent sieges and the rebellions that led to them, had caused it to fall into disrepair, and as the power of the Samani Princes commenced to decline, Khalaf, the Prince of Seistan, thought that by building this new capital, he would be able to maintain himself as an independent ruler. The town was built upon a low ridge of hard clay, which was a good foundation for the fortress and town walls. The elevation of the ridge was a protection against the inroads of floods. To the east of Zahidan, at a little distance from it was a canal, and it was probably on its banks that Timur halted his army.

The ruins of Zahidan owe their preservation to the site they occupy on a ridge of white hard clay, which saved them from the fate that befell the remains of Bina-i-Kai when the Helmand broke through this place.

The best way to see Zahidan is to examine the citadel and the ruins inside, and then visit the extra mural palaces and the reservoir.

The city is almost a rectangle, its length is double its width, and it is placed in the direction from which the wind blows. Very little can be seen of the north and south walls, but the east and west are in better condition. The citadel, now in a state of ruin, had a triple line of defences and occupied a position a little above the line that would divide the city into two equal parts. There were four gates, one in each face, and two gates to the fortress, both of them having flanking towers; and guard-rooms above, which, with the towers could have held from two to three hundred men, whose duty it was to guard the entrance. Traverses were built within the gate, in order to force the enemy who might penetrate into the fort to remain under fire as long as possible. The palace where the Princes of Seistan dwelt were in the north-west part of the citadel. Near it were the dwellings within the two outer lines of defences.

The citadel was strongly built. The bastions of the outer defences were made of pisé, with a coating of unbaked brick over it. The lower portions of the walls were made of baked brick. The cores of archways were formed with baked brick, above and behind which were piles of pisé. The town walls, too, were constructed on the same principle.

The inside of the inner fort enclosed by the highest wall is quadrangular, and has ten towers round it. The towers at the angles of the quadrangle had elongated windows ending in a point cut into them in two tiers. The windows were about six feet in height, but the doors never exceeded five feet. There are rooms in all the towers, but all are extremely small. The city boundary makes a detour to the south-east at the third tower, all the buildings visible being on the east of the wall, and none to the west.

The bower of Malik Kutubuddin's daughter is still pointed out. The Malik's daughter who was famed for her beauty and accomplishments had long been enamoured of Timur, and when he laid siege to Zahidan, she wrote

him letters and fastening them to arrows, discharged them into his lines from her bower. In her letters, she told him the secret of the underground supply of water (which is said to have existed). The supply was cut off by Timur, and the capital forced to surrender. After the capture of Zahidan, Timur married the Princess, she having stipulated for this as the price of her treachery. However, he was worried that she might betray him as she had betrayed her father and her country, and so just before he left Seistan, he gave orders for her head to be cut off. Her treachery is one of the arguments cited by Mahomedans against the education of females.

The eastern gate, known as the Bakhtiari Gate, rises well above the sand-hills. It was supposed to be the fighting station of the Chief of the Bakhtiaris, who at that time were inhabitants of Seistan, and whose task was to man a length of the walls on either side of the gate where their Chief was. The other tribes too presumably had their particular place assigned to them.

The wall is a high double wall and castellated with loopholes half-way up the wall. They stand about forty feet high, but sand has accumulated in many places to a height of about twenty-five feet. The parallel walls are only about fifteen feet apart, and between them runs a road from north-west to south-east. Each wall is made up of two brick walls filled between with beaten earth. The lower portion, made of kiln-baked bricks, is corroded by wind and sand. The upper portion, made of horizontal layers of baked bricks every four feet and mud bricks between, is still well preserved. The eastern wall is not castellated, and has rows of holes at the bottom. The western wall had a castellated summit.

A little further to the south of the Bakhtiari Gate are the ruins of wind-mills where probably the revenue grain was converted into flour.

Beyond the wall to the south-east is an extensive graveyard, and a ziarat. The tombs are still in good preservation, and made of kiln-burnt bricks plastered over with mud. The upper face of these graves is ornamented by a series of superposed rectangles.

Some distance beyond the graveyard and within the walls of the town is a small ziarat dedicated to the forty-four Pirs or Saints of Zahidan. It is a tomb with a wall of baked bricks built in isolated piers and surrounding the tomb. On its western side are the usual votive offerings, bundles of sticks, horns, a number of rags, and pieces of ribbon, red, white and blue. But amongst all these worthless articles are two marble tablets. One of these is a dedicatory tablet commemorating the building of a masjid by Shah Ali, a member of the princely family of Seistan; the second records the death of the head of the junior branch of the same family, Amir Ghiasuddin Mohammed Kaiani. These tablets are beautifully carved, and one has an ornamentation of two sprays of flowers in each of the two upper corners.

There are various other large pieces of marble and stone, and also two pieces of writing on blue enamel. Little oil lamps too form part of the decorations. So great, however, is the shifting of the sand, that when I visited it in 1928, every detail of the shrine could be seen. In 1929, almost a year to the very day, the sand had completely covered up the shrine, and all that could be seen were two sticks standing up to mark the site of the place.

Zahidan was watered by canals, as the river was nowhere near it. The large canals, of which there were three, can be followed up for several miles. The water was distributed in small cuts through the city, and the gardens, and the cultivated lands. The environs of the city consisted of walled gardens extending perhaps about half a mile on either side.

The extra-mural ruins of Zahidan consist of the following :—To the north about a mile is an extra mural palace known as the Koleh-i-Timur or the Sara-i-Siasati. This was situated originally in a garden surrounded by a wall guarded by towers at short intervals. The enclosure is almost a square, each side being approximately about a thousand feet. Within the enclosure the remains of the palace are yet standing. Each face of the wall possesses a gate, but the main entrance is in the east wall. It contains some large apartments, but not so large as in the palaces, but large enough to have been commodious and comfortable.

The Palaces show a lofty Hall of Audience in the centre reaching to the domed roof with smaller apartments around it on two floors. In the larger of the palaces, the western end of the hall ends in a bay, and a staircase placed on the outside gave access to the upper storey. Behind the palace are houses for the menials.

To the north-west of the palace, beyond the walls, are the remains of a masjid, and close to it is a hauz or reservoir of water with a domed roof which has fallen in. A canal passed to the west of these ruins, and went off to the north-west. Round its banks, where houses once stood, are now heaps of bricks and mounds. To the north of the extra mural palace is a maidan or open plain covered with gravel that extends for a quarter of a square mile, almost right up to the masjid. Canals pass to the east and west of it. Beyond this maidan to the north-west the country was covered with homesteads, which extended for miles along the course of canals.

All the ruins to the south and south-east of Zahidan have been completely destroyed by the wind.

Seals, coins, stone weapons, lamps and glazed pottery and tiles have been dug up here, and everywhere round about these ruins are found innumerable fragments of earthenware, some with interesting ornamentations, generally blue on a white ground.

Zahidan is six miles in a direct line to the north of the mound of Ram Shahristan, so the visitor has either the option of going straight to Shahristan from Zahidan, and camping out there for the night, or of returning to Shehr Zabul, and proceeding from there to Shahristan. If he has tent equipment with him, he is advised to take the former course.

CHAPTER LVIII

TO SHAHRISTAN AND BUND-I-KUHAK RETURNING TO SHEHR ZABUL VIA ATASH-GADAH, KUNDARAK, AND CHUNG-I-SHAH ALI

RAM Shahrستان is situated six miles to the north of Zahidan, and about eight miles in a north-westerly direction from the Afghan hamlet of Khwab-gah. It was one of the capitals of Seistan over a thousand years ago, long before Zaranj or Bina-i-Kai. The name exists, but there is nothing noteworthy in the way of ruins.

Just short of the most northerly point of the plateau which overlooked the delta, there is a detached mound about half a mile long, and about two hundred yards in width and surrounded on all sides by heavy deposits of alluvial soil. It rises about a hundred feet above the plain. An ancient ditch separates the southern end from the rest, and this was probably the citadel or palace. In the centre of the mound are a few graves and a Baluch ziarat, and at the north end overlooking the plain are the remains of a windmill of recent date. On the summit is a mass of debris, and a quantity of red pottery in fragments. The citadel is a shapeless mass of ruins. There are ravines and fissures cut by the action of the weather, containing all sorts of debris, broken pottery, red dust of burnt brick, and a few pieces of vitrified brick. None of the pottery seems to be glazed. Walls, towers and battlements have vanished long ago, but on the western edge of the mound can be traced a resemblance to the outline of defensive works. Here too the detached fragments are divided by deep fissures and gaps, but are grouped. To the east in a small patch of cultivation, a mound some twenty yards in length is visible. This is all that remains of Ram Shahrستان, except the name.

A mile to the west of the mound of Shahrستان, is a mound with an enclosure thereon, a worn and decaying enclosure which still holds its own in spite of the silt and sand that have concealed everything. The interior of the enclosure is all covered with silt. This is the Akhur or stable for Rustam's horse, in other words, the remains of a Zoroastrian Tower of Silence. Shahrستان is the oldest of the cities of Seistan. This city was inhabited long before the time of Mohammed, and it was once a populous city, and the dead in those days were exposed in the Dakhmas or Towers of Silence, at a distance from human habitations. When Ram Shahrستان was destroyed, and abandoned, the Towers of Silence must have been used by the rural population, until their use was discontinued in later times. The remains consist of the inner or outer walls which are circular. They are most common on the tract on the left bank of the Helmand River, and are generally seen occupying commanding sites. In later times they were utilized as watch towers on which beacons were lit to signal the approach of the enemy. It is said that when the use of these dakhmas was discontinued, the people filled up the inner annuli with earth, and allowed it to fall into ruin. In many cases the ground near it is used as a cemetery by the Mahomedans.

The general account of the desertion of Shahrستان is that an ancient dam on the Helmand broke down, and the river flooded out the town, and caused the inhabitants to flee for their lives, and Zahidan was founded by the fugitives.

Al Istakhri's account of Shahrستان has been translated by Sir H. Rawlinson :

"It is said that the ancient capital of the province, in the time of the first Persian dynasty, was on the high road from Sijistan to Kerman, as you go back to Darek, opposite to Rasak, at the distance of three stages from Zaranj, its foundations and many of its buildings remaining to the present day. The name of the city was Ram Shahrستان, and the canal of Sejistan flowed to it; owing to the bursting of the dyke in the Helmand, the water of this canal was lowered, and cut off from it; so that its prosperity diminished, and the inhabitants removed from it and built Zaranj."

The "canal of Sejistan" is the Rud-i-Seistan of modern times, which still flows about half a mile from the mound. The great mound of Shahrستان is supposed to lie opposite to Rashak, and if the description of Istakhri about Rashak be correct, then there is no doubt about the identification of Shahrستان. Rashak lay on the great Trade Route from the Persian Gulf ports to Herat, and the trade route has been definitely identified.

Six miles to the east of the ruins of Shahrستان is the modern village of Khoja Ahmed. Several canals have to be crossed and the Rud-i-Seistan has to be forded before getting there. The river near Khoja Ahmed, some four miles from the dam, is about forty yards wide, and in places over six feet deep.

Three miles to the east of Khoja Ahmed is the ruined fort of Kuhak. The fort is a square strong mud enclosure of forty paces square built on a high clay mound from which it takes its name. It had a garrison of forty soldiers, whose sole occupation besides guarding the frontier, was shooting and fishing. It is without other inhabitants, and there is no cultivated land.

A mile and a half to the south-east of the fort is the great Helmand River, the Hætumant River mentioned in the Avesta, and the classic Etymander as it was termed more than 2,000 years ago. After a ride of twenty-eight miles from Shehr Zabul through the desert sand, the sight of this river is truly refreshing. The river here divides into two branches, the Rud-i-Seistan, and the Rud-i-Perian, the latter being the continuation of the river going north. Far out in the distant south across the water is the modern hamlet of Khwabgah, where the Afghan levies who are supposed to keep watch on the frontier reside. Within these two thousand years, this unbridled river has changed its course several times, and ruined several capitals of Seistan. At present it is the boundary line between Iran and Afghanistan.

Across the Helmand is the dam known as the Bund-i-Kuhak, a very temporary concern, but as Sykes says, perhaps its strength lies in its weakness, for a stone dam may cause the river to change its course. The length of the dam is about seven hundred and twenty feet, and depth about eighteen feet, breadth one hundred and ten feet, and length across the original bed of the river five hundred and twenty feet. The great bund has existed for over a hundred years, but it was so constructed by the Amir of Kain as to turn the course of the river, and bring its waters into the districts of Iranian Seistan. In former years, the bund used to be swept away by the river, and a new bund built every year. The present bund is due to the Amir of Kain who took special pains to make it more or less permanent. The only material used is tamarisk, and it is formed of fascines of tamarisk branches closely interwoven together, stakes being driven into the river-bed at intervals;

the branches used are green and fresh, but of no great size: and the interlacing is very close. Originally the interstices between these branches were filled up with loose earth and stones brought from a distance, and it is said that the stability of the bund is due to this process. The bund was constructed by 2,000 men in three months, and all classes of Seistan gave their help in the work on which their own prosperity depended. The greater part of the labour was in bringing from a distance the great quantity of tamarisk that was required; but once the branches were brought the actual construction was done in a short time by a man of Bunjar, a master in the art, but who refused to impart his knowledge to anyone but his own son. The bund is repaired every year after the spring floods are over, and its face towards the river is annually increased by a yard or more, but the repairs are done by about two or three hundred men, or even less. When the river is in flood, the waters escape over the bund, and flow in the northern channel to the Hamun: a passage is cut in the bund itself to reduce the violence of the pressure of the water, as the Helmand flows with a considerable current.

The Rud-i-Seistan is about one hundred and fifty feet wide, and half its contents are drawn off by supplementary canals by the time it reaches Kimak. On the left bank of the river, some four hundred yards distant, there is a small canal cut above the bund, commenced by Taj Mohammed, intended to convey water to Sehkoha. The work, however, was a failure.

From the Rud-i-Perian, a mile above the bund, a canal is cut which supplies Nad Ali with water. At the time of my visit, a considerable amount of water was flowing through the bund. During the flood season, the river overflows its banks, and rushes into its old bed. When the floods subside, great fish come to the foot of the bund, and attempt to leap over it into the deeper water, but being unable to do so, are staked in the tamarisk branches and any amount are caught. In the dry season, quantities of snakes breed inside the bund, and it is said that several men are always bitten when they begin to remove the branches for their annual repairs.

Looking at this mighty and erratic river, one begins to wonder when the Helmand will again change its course and how, and what will happen when it does. That it must change its course is certain, as it has done so in the past, and then how many more villages will be destroyed, and what ancient ruins will disappear?

To the south in the "sterile and silent desert of Seistan" are seen ruins of buildings. These buildings of mud were made by the Perso-Afghan Boundary Commission, and the buildings are more or less in a fairly good state of preservation. Not far from there is the caravan road from Afghanistan to Sehkoha. Where this track crossed the dasht that separates the northern from the southern delta it was marked by a succession of low pillars constructed with baked brick. These pillars were placed by the side of the road chiefly on the left hand side. They have now disappeared but the bricks of which they were made have turned into dust, and stained the ground with an indelible dull orange colour. In some of these places fragments of lime and mortar too have been discovered. This track is still the direct road from the delta towards the south, and passes through Machi, near Hauzdar (Kalehi-i-Rustam), both having been deserted for the last one hundred years or more. The road is unutterably dreary, and should never be undertaken without a guide.

It is advisable to spend the night in Khoja Ahmed. On the return journey to Shehr Zabul, proceeding south-west, and crossing the Rud-i-Seistan, we come to the Atash-Gadah which is about two miles from the left

bank of the river and about a mile or more to the west of the modern village of Kimak, inside the flood limits of the Rud-i-Seistan canal. Usually there are dreadful dust-storms in this area. The ruin named the Atash-Gadah is at the northern end of a block of Dasht. The building was constructed of unbaked brick or pise. A large hall or room originally covered with a domed roof can still be recognized, and two of the walls are standing still. There is nothing to show that these ruins are those of a fire temple, but local traditions agree on that point. The remains are very old, almost as old as the ruins on the mound of Shahrستان. These formless ruins, and the Pyreum of Karku Shah are the only traces of such institutions in Iranian Seistan.

On the south extremity of this island are other domed buildings of quite recent date. These are mausolea, and in one of them is buried the Nahrui Sardar Alam Khan. A detached mass to the south of Kaleh-i-Nau is the site of the grave of Dost Mohammed Khan, the former builder of the town.

I have spoken of the modern village of Kimak. It has risen from a hamlet to a considerable town. It possesses a square mud citadel, surrounded by mud walls, and straggling houses. The fort has an octagonal-shaped mud tower. When the river overflows, a marsh is formed near the village on which can be found duck and wild-fowl. Both Kimak and the modern village of Kaleh-i-Nau to the south-east of the Atash-Gadah are situated at the edge of the high desert plateau which intervenes between the low rich country and the left bank of the Helmand. Here is the limit to cultivation and irrigation in the south of Seistan. This high ground near Kimak encroaches on the very banks of the canal. Large masses of clay whose bases are surrounded by shingles and water-worn pebbles dot the plain, and testify to the action of floods and rains.

From the Atash-Gadah we proceed north to the modern village of Wasilan about two miles away, and then turn north-west to the ruins of Kundarak (six miles from Wasilan), one of the later capitals of Seistan.

In 1639, the troops of the Moghul Emperor Shah Jehan invaded Seistan and besieged the capital, Kaleh-i-Fath. In the time of Malik Feth Ali Khan, the Helmand changed its course from the Rud-i-Biyaban. It was a year of great flood, and the Helmand came down in full force; the force of the waters swept away the weir known as the Bund-i-Bulbaka, and all other embankments. So Kaleh-i-Fath had to be abandoned, and Kundarak was built.¹ Once the Helmand reverted to the northern delta, on account of the ravages of floods, and because the population migrated to more fertile country, Kaleh-i-Fath fell into decay, though for several years it may have remained the headquarters of the family of the Maliks. The river, however, kept inclining towards Kundarak, and though the latter remained the capital a generation after Malik Feth Ali Khan's death, embankments had to be raised to protect the capital from the inroads of the river.

The construction of Kundarak shows a marked decadence in the building powers of the Seistanis. It is built in a crude way. There is a fortified palace, or a citadel enclosed by two outer lines of defences, the inner of the two lines of walls enclosing the town. Between it and the outermost walls, there were a few large buildings set in the midst of gardens and cultivation. The walls are rectangular, and the sides of the enclosures are oriented, thus differing from Zahidan. Inside the inner walls were mean hovels, built of sun-dried bricks with domed roofs. A street almost straight joined the east and west gate, and divided the inner fort into two equal parts. It passed under the south wall of the palace. The palace itself

¹ Tate, "Seistan."

is a lofty pile of buildings, which occupied the western side of a courtyard enclosed by high walls, along the inside of which there were quarters for the servants. This palace was fortified to a certain extent. The town lay to the east and south side of the palace, and on the opposite side, between the palace and the walls, were a few large-sized buildings which are now quite in ruins. The town itself is in a little better state of preservation. All the buildings are built of sun-dried bricks. The inner walls can still be traced, but the outermost wall has fallen completely into ruin. In both the walls there was a gate in each face, that of the outer wall facing south, and defended by a detached work, which too is in a state of decay.

To the west of Kundarak, outside the city walls and in an enclosure, are the ruins of a windmill built by Qazi Abdullah of Kundarak, and known as the As-i-Ghazi (The Qazi's Windmill).

Kundarak lasted through the period of Nadir Shah. From it went out Prince Mahmud the Afghan who seized the province of Khorassan, and ruled it as an independent monarch for some time, but eventually was defeated by Nadir Shah. Malik Feth Ali Khan the Second was put to death in A.D. 1747 (A.H. 1160), and then followed a period of confusion. The Helmand was constantly changing its course, and for this reason, probably, Kundarak had to be abandoned, and with its end closes the revival of prosperity. After Kundarak was abandoned, the succeeding capitals degenerated into mere villages such as Shehr Zabul is at the present day.

Both Kundarak and the As-i-Ghazi are situated within the ancient limits of the Mahal of Gulistan.

Turning north-west from Kundarak, and between it and the present capital is an old ruin called Chung-i-Shah Ali. The fort is absolutely in ruins, and most of the houses as well, but the plan of the city can be seen quite well. The western doorway too can be clearly seen.

North-east of the Chung-i-Shah Ali is an enclosure called the Bagh-i-Ziro, a delightful garden full of fruit trees. Inside it is an old ruin, which with the Chung-i-Shah Ali are possibly the last of the ruins, attributable to the Zahidan period. Very little remains of it.

North-west of the Bagh-i-Ziro, about four miles away, is Sher Zabul, the present capital.

CHAPTER LIX

MIAN KANGI

LEAVING Shehr Zabul, we proceed north-west to the village of Shaitan, and then to Deh Gul-Mohammed Beg, on to the village of Burj-i-Afghan. East of this last village are very extensive ruins of the Zahidan period, and were laid waste when that city was captured.

Just after leaving Burj-i-Afghan, the Niatek River has to be forded. During the floods, a tulin plies lower down the river, and after proceeding through a tamarisk jungle we come to the modern village of Rindan. The mound of Rindan was the old citadel of the fort. The greater ruins are those of manor houses, and in a central position with reference to these there was a strongly fortified post to which the inhabitants could flee for refuge. The latter is represented by the mound of Rindan. The old citadel was rectangular, and enclosed by solid walls which now form mounds of considerable size. At the four corners stood flanking towers or bastions. The interior was divided by a wall, extending from the citadel to the eastern face of the square enclosure, into two unequal parts. The mounds which are the remains of this wall are strewn with baked bricks and pottery, the bricks having been set in lime mortar not clay. The northern portion is full of shapeless mounds, but the smaller southern portion was laid out quite straight in three parallel streets. In each portion of the fort there was a gate. Between these streets can still be seen the traces of small houses, and along the inside of the southern rampart can be seen vestiges of chambers about sixteen feet by eight feet which extended all round the inner side of the fort walls. These gave shelter to the garrison. The fort was square, about six hundred feet by six hundred feet, but the walls, buildings and citadels have been reduced to a mass of debris long ago. To the south of this fort are the remains of what might have been an outer line of defence. On the north is the ruin of a fortified place, destroyed by floods from the Helmand. A large canal which flowed under the east wall of Zahidan passed this fort on the east, and another canal also from Zahidan flowed past it on the west.

The ruins to the east of Rindan are most extensive, and were above the reach of the floods, and hence are in a better state of preservation. They come to an end about three miles to the north-west of Rindan, and end in a large ruin called the Chahil Khaneh, composed of domed chambers surrounding an interior hall. The chambers are supposed to have numbered forty. The building may have been a masjid and a Madrasseh combined.

There are ruins to the west and south-west of the old Rindan fort. Here the country is cultivated, and bricks are taken out of the buildings by anyone who needs them.

From Rindan can be seen the village of Jellalabad to the east, the property of the Kaiani Maliks, who claim direct descent from the ancient Iranians. According to Sir John Malcolm, they are "plunderers" and have nothing to do with the ancient Iranians. Jellalabad at present is a place of no importance.

Malcolm¹ says :—

"The countries of Seistan, Baluchistan and Makran, had since the death of Ahmed Shah, granted no more than a nominal obedience. The chief of one of the principal tribes of the former province, though he only

¹ "History of Persia," Vol. II, page 237.

enjoys a revenue of a few thousand rupees, and his whole force hardly amounts to five hundred men, styles himself the descendant of the ancient kings of Persia, and adds to his name the proud title of Kaiani. This plunderer, for such he is, inhabits a small town called Jellalabad, situated amid the vast ruins of the ancient city of Seistan or Dooshak; and among those that obey him are the tribe of Noshirwan who feed their flocks in the vale of Sohrab. The existence of these ancient names among this rude and unaltered people, the immense ruins which are found in every part of this deserted, but once flourishing province, afford the strongest evidence that there is a foundation in truth for what has ever been deemed the most fabulous part of the ancient history of Persia."

We are now in the Mian Kangi district, which is one dense jungle of tamarisk some twenty feet in height, the villages being situated in clearings. This district is one continuous forest intersected frequently by water channels, and having artificial mounds, probably the ruins of old forts, rising above the surrounding country. A guide is absolutely essential, otherwise the stranger is sure to lose his way.

From Rindan, leaving Jellalabad on the east, we proceed north through the villages of Deh Haji and Pulgi to Ghurghury. Between Ghurghury and Takht-i-Shah, the country is known as the Vale of Sohrab. Here was supposed to have been the great fight between the Iranian hero, Rustam, and his son Sohrab, mentioned in Firdausi's Shah Nameh. Here Sohrab was killed. About three miles from Ghurghury is a mound known as the Tapeh-i-Sohrab, which is supposed to be Sohrab's grave. I was told that the bones of a huge man had been found there. The modern Iranian wanting to get rich as quick as possible thinks there is treasure buried there. It is advisable to spend the night in Ghurghury.

Returning south from Ghurghury, we come to the Ziarat-i-Shah Ismail. Here are a group of mounds, evidently old buildings. Inside the ziarat at the time of my visit, an aged man was lying down, and three women standing by him. He had had fever for over three months, and the women had laid him inside the ziarat hoping he would get well. On the other side of the shrine, an old woman sat on the ground, groaning with a headache. The tradition is that if anybody sick goes to the shrine, and spends a few days therein, he gets well again. Nothing will induce these people to go to hospital or take proper treatment.

Three miles to the south-east of the ziarat is a big cemetery, and close to the cemetery is the Takht-i-Pul. The ruins of the bridges are most disappointing. The two brick bridges were built in the ninth century A.D., but now the arches have been broken down, and the bricks taken away for the cemetery close by. Still enough remains to show the structure.

Takht-i-Pul is mentioned in two itineraries which were translated and quoted by Sir H. Rawlinson. In the first, it is stated that having passed Basher (Peshawaran), the traveller will "pass on the way to Karkuyieh, by a bridge, the residue of the Helmand water, four farsakhs to Karkuyieh, and three farsakhs to Zaranj." The bridge stands in an alluvial plain, surrounded by a jungle of tall tamarisks. The roadway is eight feet above the level of the plain. The bridge was solidly built, and made of burnt bricks. The approach to it was probably an inclined plane, the roadway being ramped to meet the slope of the bridge. The bridge had two arches separated by a pier ten feet in width, the ends of which project beyond the sides of the bridge. Each arch was thirteen feet

long and eighteen and a half feet high and the width of the river was probably about forty feet. The bricks forming the arches radiate from a centre.

The width of the roadway was about twenty-two feet, and it had a parapet continued down to the ends of the bridge.

The great Trade Route through Seistan passed over this bridge. The abutments on either bank of the canal were heavy blocks of masonry, and projected one and a half feet to two feet. The cement is the celebrated Saruj. From a few yards to the east of this bridge, a system of old canals ran parallel to the old road, and along the banks of these canals, there were a large number of brick kilns, and the remains of old buildings. The canals pass to the west of Mir Gul.

Close to the Takht-i-Pul are the remains of graves built with baked bricks, the superstructure of two of them having been constructed with sun-dried bricks or pisé. Here were buried the corpses of Tahir and Amru, the two murdered sons of the Prince Khalaf bin Ahmed.

Karku Shah

Leaving Takht-i-Pul we proceed south-east to Karku, or Karku Shah, the most interesting, and the most conspicuous landmark in the region of the Mian Kangi. It is a mound about thirty feet high, above which a wall rises to the height of twenty-five feet. The lower part of this wall is built of very large baked bricks, and the part above this, of either sun-dried brick or pisé.

Upon the summit of the mound is a platform, the lower part of the plinth of the ancient building of which the wall was a part. The remains of the walls were built of huge baked brick. Bricks used for the main building were of the size of twenty-four by seventeen inches and about four inches thick, and nowhere else in Seistan have such huge bricks been found. The bricks are very ancient.

The mound itself is seven hundred and fifty feet long by three hundred and sixty feet in width, and it slopes down to the ground towards the south-east. Along the north-west foot of the mound are signs of towers and bastions of pisé or sun-dried brick which probably formed part of a fortification which encircled the mound.

To the north of the great mound are a line of mounds with buildings composed of baked bricks. To the east of the mound are still other ruins one of which was probably a mausoleum. To the south of the mound are the remains of a building which may have been a mausoleum or a gate house, and on each side of this are other low mounds. About three miles to the east of Karku is Kala Tapa or "Fort Mound," the remains of a small defensive post or an outpost of Karku.

Hidden away in the jungle are mounds of brick, the remains of large-sized buildings. The country round about has often been flooded out, and there are numerous water channels, often full of water. The tamarisk jungle in the neighbourhood is about twenty-five feet high or more, and it is not easy to detect the existence of ruins. Four miles west of Karku is the modern village of Jellalabad.

The chief interest of Karku, however, lies in the fact that here are the ruins of the Karkuyieh of El-Istakhri, where existed in olden times, the

third most sacred fire temple of ancient Iran. In Sir Henry Rawlinson's *Memoir* is the following translation from the work of Kazvini, a later author than Istakhri :—

“Karkuyieh is an ancient city of Seistan, where there are two lofty cupolas about a mile apart, and each surmounted by a horse which resembles the horns of a bull. They are reported to belong to the age of Rustam, and have remained from that time to the present as objects of wonder, and beneath the two cupolas is a fire temple of the Magi, which would seem to show that the king had built near his dwelling place a temple where he might worship. The fire of this Pyrœum has not been extinguished, for the servitors who are told off to the duty of keeping up the flame, sit down at a distance of twenty cubits from the fire, and covering their mouth and breath, take with silver tongs bits of tamarisk wood of the size of a span, and when the flame languishes, and threatens to be extinguished, throw them upon the fire, stick after stick ; and this Pyrœum is one of the most celebrated of all the temples of the Magi.”

He goes on to say that Masudi assigned the foundations of the temple to Bahman, son of Isfandiar, whose warlike exploits in Seistan are so well known. Karku is undoubtedly the site of this ancient Pyrœum, and perhaps the wall on the top of the mound may have been that of the fire temple itself.

About three miles to the south-west of Karku, situated in the tamarisk jungle is the modern village of Siadek. A fine canal passes through the village, and on its banks there is a line of young willow trees well grown in all respects, but bent away from the prevailing wind. The population is composed entirely of Baluchis. It was in Siadek that the Chief of the Sanjaranis received a small grant of land. There are not many hamlets close to Siadek, and the jungles were a favourite resort for hunting parties. Wild-boars used to be very common here, but they are scarce now.

Three miles from Siadek are the outskirts of the area which is submerged by the annual floods. A stream of water has to be forded near the hamlet of Maliki. The road then goes through tamarisk thickets, several small streams have to be crossed and eventually after crossing a belt of sand, we come to the Niatak River. During the floods it can only be crossed on tutins. After crossing the main river two other branches have to be forded, and we emerge on the other side about a mile to the east of the village of Kasimabad.

The greater part of the Mian Kangi is liable to inundation every year as soon as the river rises. Large areas are under water. When the floods have subsided, a great many varieties of grass make their appearance in the lately flooded area. The whole place is full of watercourses and channels, and during the winter they are all filled with water. The small ones soon dry up. In the deeper channel, pools are formed and remain there for a long time. In the spring, the tamarisk shows to best advantage, blossoming with masses of dark purple and red flowers.

“Mian Kangi” means the “Middle Island,” i.e., between the two branches of the Helmand. The striking point about it is the absence of systematic attempts to save it from the encroachments of the river during the flood season. The soil is a sandy loam, and the embankments unless strengthened are unable to resist the action of the floods. In the north-western extremity, land has been reclaimed by embankments. On the western side, flood water has damaged an area of more than a hundred square miles. The village of Jellalabad which once had vineyards and orchards, vines and pomegranates, is nothing but a sort of fort in a desert waste.

The vine has been destroyed, and the orchards and crops have given way to the tamarisk. Damage not done by water is done by locusts nearly every year. The land round Jellalabad was the personal appanage of Malik Jallaluddin Khan, the last of the princely family which for centuries gave Rulers to Seistan. It was after him that Jellalabad was named.

After crossing the Niatak, a turn to the right from the village of Kasimabad leads to the Ziarat-i-Bibi Dost, the shrine of a highly respected saint. Bibi Dost, from what I could gather, was an Afghan lady who came over to Seistan and died here, but it is not clear why she is supposed to exercise a healing influence on injuries received from bites of rabid animals. The general belief is that as soon as a person is bitten, he or she is mad though the disease might not have taken an active form. The visit to the shrine is supposed to cure the sufferers and it is here that several people come to be cured.

The alternative route from Karku Shah to the shrine is via Jellalabad and Malikabad. In the latter place is a very pretty garden belonging to the Malik of Jellalabad.

From the ziarat, the traveller can return to Shehr Zabul via Bunjar. To do this complete trip, two nights must be spent out, one at Ghurghury or Takht-i-Shah, and the other at Siadek or Jellalabad. Tutins do not work after sunset.

CHAPTER LX

OTHER RUINS IN SEISTAN

I. Chung-i-Murghan.—A little to the east of the modern village of Chilling, is a mound called the Chung-i-Murghan with a few ruins on it. These ruins belong to the Zahidan period. Very little now remains. In the vicinity of the mound, a small hoard of silver coins struck in the reign of Malik Kutbuddin was turned up in a field some years ago.

II. Tapeh-i-Safid.—Seven and a half miles almost due south of Shehr Zabul there is a small tract of land covered with ruins of dwellings and canals. The most prominent is a mound of white clay formed by the debris of ruined buildings. Here stood a pleasure house in the days of Malik Kutbuddin, and all the lands round the buildings were laid out in gardens. This sub-division was called the Gulistan (Rose Garden). The gardens supplied annually seventy "mans" of rose leaves to the palace which were used in distilling rose-water. Gone is all that glory, and what once used to be a flourishing place is now a desolate waste. It included the lands of the modern villages of Bahramabad and Bagh-Ak on the west, Jotegh on the north, and Jazinak on the east, and Pulgi on the south. The ruins of Kundarak and the As-i-Ghazi which are comparatively modern, were situated within the ancient limits of the Mahal of Gulistan.

The mound referred to above is the Tapeh-i-Safid. Here were found some huge bricks of the type found at Karku Shah, but little smaller. They were all taken away by one of the Maliks for his hammam or bath. Two miles to the west of the Tapeh are the ruins of an old town with the walls of gardens round it, which can just be distinguishable; to the south of these, half buried in the sandpits, are the ruins of a domed building near which the fragments of arches are just visible. These are known as the Madrassah or College, and are of comparatively recent date. In 1903, in some mounds to the south-west of Bahramabad, a labourer who was exploring the site for bricks, found a few gold coins which bore Kutbuddin's name, and which weighed two and a half miscal each.

III. Ruins of Ghulam Shah Khan.—Four miles to the west of Shehr Zabul there are ruins consisting of castellated manor-houses, detached residences, all of which were surrounded by gardens, grouped round a fortified dwelling. These are the ruins of Ghulam Shah Khan, and the place was the abode of the Resident or Intendant of either Ahmed Shah or his son Timur Shah of Kabul, who represented the Suzerain Power at the court of the Malik of Seistan, who had become a vassal of the dynasty founded by Ahmed Shah Durrani. The duty of the Intendant was to represent and watch over the interests of his master, and he was present to support the Prince in his dealings with refractory subjects.

IV. Allahabad-Miyan-i-Sheila.—Six miles to the north-west of Shehr Zabul, and two miles to the north-west of Ghulam Shah Khan. It is rectangular in plan; its greatest length is from north to south and covers an area of eight hundred feet by five hundred feet. Streets connect the north and south, and east and west gates dividing the interior into four quarters. Within these were a number of dwellings much inferior to those of Kundarak. The walls, originally built of baked bricks, are now completely in ruins, and there is no palace within the walls. The northern gate can still be traced. The place was deserted on account of inroads of the water from the Hamun



KALEH-I-TIMUR AND EXTRA MURAL RUINS, ZAHIDAN



SEHKOIA FORT.

which constantly inundated the lands, and even came right up to the walls of the town.

V. Sehkoha Fort.—Two miles to the east of the modern village of Lutk, is the very picturesque and imposing Sehkoha Fort. The place derives its name from three clay or mud hills in its midst, and is built in an irregular circular form around the base of the two principal hills. The fort is modern, but is built on a very ancient site. The southernmost of these hills is surmounted by the Ark or Citadel, an ancient structure known as the citadel of Mir Kuchak Khan (grandfather of Sardar Ali Khan). It is at present kept in good repair. Connected with it is the second hill called Burj-i-Falaksar, and about a hundred and fifty yards to the west is the third hill, not so high as the other two, but having quite a comfortable building on top of it, a caravanserai, and the house built by Sardar Ali Khan for his royal bride. The town lies at the base of the two hills. Water is always obtainable by digging a few feet below the surface, and inside the fort are two deep disused wells. The walls are about twenty-five feet high and built of mud, and in very good repair. The gardens in the neighbourhood produce melons and grapes, mulberries and pomegranates. The climate is supposed to be the best in Seistan, and on account of its distance from the Hamun, it is comparatively free from mosquitoes. Inside the fort, the houses are in ruins. The fort was acquired by the Sarabandi Chief about a hundred and eighty years ago, and the buildings date from that time. The modern fort is not mentioned in history till the nineteenth century.

VI. Kaleh-i-Sam.—About two and a half miles to the north-west of Sehkoha there is a very old fortified enclosure about 1,900 feet long and five hundred feet wide. A gateway in the eastern face can still be recognized; on the other side is a gap which gives access to the interior, but whether it is the remains of a gateway or whether it is a breach due to the weather, it is difficult to say. The fort is built on the edge of the dasht, but the block of dasht on which it stands is separated from the east by a narrow strip of alluvial deposit. In the commencement of the nineteenth century when the Helmand flowed into the Hamun below the Kuh-i-Khwaja, one branch of it flowed past this fort towards Warmal village. The orientation of the walls differs from that of other ruins, for the four sides face the cardinal points of the compass. The walls are massive and built of pisé. A moat was cut across the dasht to protect the south wall, the other walls being naturally protected by the river. The fort was probably built at a time when these three sides had the protection of a river. There are no buildings within the fort.

VII. The Mil-i-Nadiri.—Across the Hamun, on the old caravan road from Seistan to Birjand via Safidava, is another of these ruined towers known as the Mil-i-Nadiri which has been mentioned in Chapter LII.

CHAPTER LXI

THE HAMUN OR THE SEISTAN LAKE

“Where lies Lake Kasava, along with the Hætumant River.”

Avesta—Zamyad Yasht

THE Hamun is the Lake Kasava of the Avesta, and the Helmand, the Hætumant River.

To the north and west of Seistan is a big marsh, the Hamun, receiving the waters of the Helmand. The village of Adhimi is situated close to the lagoon, and along its edges dwells a tribe of Sayads or Fowlers. Living close to them, but entirely distinct are the Gaudar or Cow-keepers whose herds of cattle graze in the lagoon, feeding off the young reeds.

The Sayads say they are pure Seistanis, and they escaped from the hordes of Timur by taking food on board their rafts, and hiding in the reeds. The feather trade is their chief interest, only one or two families engaging in fishing. The birds are caught by means of nets held open by stakes, into which they are slowly driven, lanes being cut in the reeds or stalked out in the water. The man lies hidden on his tutin, and as soon as he sees a bird swimming over his net, he pulls a string which releases the stakes, and thus catches the fowl.

The northern part of the Hamun is known as the Lake of Sawari, from the town of Sawari Shah which lies below its waters, and from the shrine of Sawari Shah, an old saint, which was situated on a bluff of its western shore. Though various streams flow into it, the Hamun is dependent on the Helmand for its existence. Its catchment area in its fullest extent is 150,000 square miles, but that is subject to great variation. The greatest length of this lake or depression is about six hundred miles from north-east to south-west; its greatest breadth being about three hundred and fifty miles, but only half this area is an effective water-supply. The Helmand pours its waters from south to north. The other rivers that enter the lake reach it from the east and the north. Commencing on the east, they are the Khash, the Khuspas, the Farah, and the Harut. All are torrents rising swiftly and subsiding rapidly. For the greater part of the year there is very little water in them, and certainly none to feed the lake. In the spring, the Khash River brings a lot of water, but very often the Khuspas before reaching the lake dwindles to a narrow ditch full of brine, and no flood water may come down it.

The Farah Rud drains the Ghur country, noted for its inaccessibility, the strength of its fortress, and the turbulence of its inhabitants. The district of Farah from which the river takes its name was celebrated as a grain-producing district. Heavy floods come down this river and last for several days. Whole trees have been brought down by the force of the water, and deposited on the mud flats at the mouth of the river.

The Harut enters the Sawari Hamun, twenty miles to the north of the Farah Rud, but like the Khuspas does not add much to the volume of the lake.

The Bandan River on the west discharges its flood waters into the lake once or twice in five or six years.

Thus, it can be seen that the Hamun depends chiefly on the Helmand, and in the years when the Helmand runs dry, there is no lake.

The shore line on the west is fairly constant, but on the east, its limits are indefinite. First fills the tract west of the mouth of the Parian, then water spreads to the eastern parts of the lake, and also comes down southwards, and in years of exceptionally high floods, water flows down the Sheila, and may empty itself into the Gaud-i-Zirreh in Afghanistan. Thus it is difficult to give the extent of the Seistan Lake. All that can be said is that in such and such a year, it occupied such and such an area.

Portions of the lake area are cultivated at regular seasons. Cattle graze in the water on the reed beds that occupy the margins of the lake. Rafts are made of these reeds, and they are very buoyant and known as tutins. People ply these tutins on the lake. They are buoyant enough to take cars and lorries. The owners of the cattle, and the herdsmen use the old Seistan dialect.

Not only are portions of the lake cultivated, but certain parts used to be permanently occupied. The Hamun-i-Sawari, which for centuries must have been dry land, now flows over the town of that name. In times of exceptionally low water the ruins can be seen, and brick-built walls and the streets between the buildings can still be traced.

The Hamun is the best shooting area in the whole of Iran. Birds can be found in thousands here.

CHAPTER LXII

SHEHR ZABUL TO KUH-I-KHWAJA

THIS is the most interesting of the excursions in Seistan and can be done in a day. After crossing the Naurab, the road goes via the village of Dodhi. To the south-west of Shehr Zabul, about eighteen miles away, is a low flat topped hill, and from whatever direction the traveller approaches the province, he sees this low flat-topped hill that has played a great part in the legends of Seistan, and also in the Zoroastrian religion. It is the Mount Ushidarena of the Avesta. The other names by which it is known are the Kuh-i-Zor or the Kuh-i-Rustam. The ground round it is dry in the autumn, but in the late winter and spring, the water from the Hamun encroaches on to it, and converts it into an island.

The mountain is of an elongated shape, with a top that looks absolutely flat from a distance. Seen from the east, it stretches for about three and a half miles or more at its base, and about three on the plateau, which by no means is as flat as it looks. On the south-west side it stands a little higher. The hill is nine hundred feet high, and rocky. The sides are very precipitous, especially at the upper portion. The lower portion has accumulations of clay, mud and sand in a gentle slope. Access can only be got to it on the south and south-east.

The road to the summit leads by a narrow gorge which divides the mountain into two, and the path is a very stony one, between high vertical rocks. A little way up the road, a small reservoir for rain-water is found. On reaching the summit, we find that it is actually concave, and undulating. It is covered with graves, and the graves are in compartments, and contain whole families. In the centre of the plateau are two artificial pits dug into the earth and rock, and having stone sides. They may be the remains of tanks for water now empty. The graves are either constructed of boulders roughly laid to form places of sepulchres, or are domes of mud, or else cairns with pillars.

The Ziarat-i-Gandun Piran.

On the northern side of the plateau is a high rectangular building, a front arch giving access to a small door. This is the Ziarat-i-Gandun Piran (The Shrine of the Wheat of the Old Man). The inside consists of a large whitewashed single room with high vaulted ceiling. In the centre is a tomb six yards long with a gabled top. It measures one and a half yards across at the head, and one yard at its foot. Two stone pillars five feet high stand at either end. A rope is tied to these pillars, and from the rope hang a number of votive offerings. On a platform along the wall are two brass candlesticks, and a number of rags. On the altar platform are a number of stones. There are pictures of animals on the wall, goats and dogs, both male and female. On two sticks are hung more votive offerings, masses of rags, red, blue, white and yellow. It is the custom of people who visit the ziarats to put a stone on the tomb.

On either side of the ziarat are two domed low stone buildings, and behind it is another building with a wall round it. In front of the ziarat is the priest's house, with broad stone walls, and containing nine rooms. The ceilings here are semi-cylindrical.

Near the ziarat are a number of modern graves, which rise about five feet above the ground, and have three steps by which the upper part could be reached.

South of this ziarat is another smaller one. The two end pillars are standing upright, the northern one broken in half. The door is facing south, and has a window above it. The walls have a foundation of stone, and are built entirely of mud above. There is a perforated window in the western wall, and a receptacle in the northern wall. The tomb is eight feet long by four feet wide.

On the brow of the northern scarp is a domed building of rude construction, with two stone weights at the entrance. Inside it is a tomb of sun-dried bricks, twenty feet long. This is the shrine dedicated to Khwaja Ghaltan, and the tradition is that whoever makes a petition to the Khwaja, and sleeps on his doorsteps, if his desire be granted, he will be thrown several feet by some supernatural force, otherwise nothing will happen.

At the vernal equinox crowds of gaily dressed Seistanis come here. The lower classes run foot races, and put the weight with the stones referred to above, while the Khans ride donkey races. There is also a custom of throwing burnt wheat on to the Ziarat-i-Gandun Piran. This is supposed to ensure a good harvest. The rest of the wheat is eaten.

From this shrine an excellent view of the Hamun to the north can be obtained, and on a clear day, Shehr Zabul too can be seen.

On the south side of the mountain is the Kuk Fort. With the exception of a large, round, broken down tower about forty-five feet in diameter at the base, there is nothing else to be seen. This was supposed to be the scene of Rustam's first exploit, when as a boy he captured the fort, and slew Kuk, the King.

Upon a sheer cliff overlooking the Dehaneh-i-Sokhta, and the wide expanse of the Hamun on the south and west, there is the ruin of a small but ancient building, the Chihil Dukhtaran (Forty Virgins). It was fortified, and there are two vaulted loopholed chambers in each tower. The arched entrance is made of the laminæ of thin sun-dried clay. The building stands on a plinth of large stones laid in clay, and there is a line of loopholes above the plinth. Stone and mud enclosures lie about thirty yards to the north of it. One legend is that in olden times forty maidens lived here, whose voices and laughter could be distinctly heard by members of their family, who lived in an ancient fort situated on the same site on which modern Sehkoha was afterwards built, a distance of twenty-five miles. The other legend says that in ancient days there was in the city of the Kakkhas a deep well, the abode of certain godly virgins, to whom people went from far and near for blessings. Visitors used to stand listening near the well, and if their prayers were accepted, the virgins laughed heartily, whereby the city gained the name of Kaka-ha (Roar of Laughter). Silence on the part of the maidens was a sign that their prayers were not granted.

Kaleh-i-Kakha or the City of the Kakkhas.

The city is built into the cliff on its south-eastern side and was strongly fortified. There is an outer wall with bastions, and an extensive courtyard in the centre enclosed by a high wall which had towers one at each angle. The town is not large. The tradition is that when the Helmand changed its course, and converted this part of the Hamun into a naizar, and the country was under water, a Seyid Arbab built a small fort on a spit of dasht which projected towards the south from the fort of the plateau. The outer walls have fallen into ruins, and form a line of mounds some distance in front of the inner line and walls which enclose the town and palace. The

outer wall is a semi-circle, with both its flanks resting on the slopes of the hill-sides on which the town is built. The lower courses of the buildings are made of large blocks of stone set in clay mortar, and above these the buildings are made of pisé. The palace was made of sun-dried bricks.

There must have been wells in the town or within the outer walls, or water must have been carried upon donkeys. In every watercourse on the slopes of the plateau, there are dams of stones, the earth between them having long since crumbled away. They were built to retain rain-water, which shows that water must have been a difficulty in those days.

The city of the Kakkhas was supposed to have been built before Rustam's time, and its Chief was at feud with Rustam's family. The latter, however, took the city and captured Kuk the King. It is mentioned in history in the fifteenth century A.D., when the author says with reference to Seistan that it possessed a stronghold in an island in the Hamun. The Prince of Seistan, Muizuddin Hussein, rebelled against the Governor of Babar Mirza, the Timuride Prince of Herat, and in A.H. 859 the former took refuge in the castle, but was forced to abandon the country by his own subjects, who made peace with the Governor. After the death of Malik Hussain the fort and town were entirely abandoned, as the same author mentions that it was in a deserted condition. He also states that the stronghold was sometimes called the Fort of Rustam. Later on, it must have been repeopled, for it became famous for its seven years' resistance to the attack of Nadir Shah's troops, when the Kayani King, Malik Fath, having abandoned his capital Koleh-i-Fath, had taken refuge in the city of the Kakkhas. In those days, the Hamun converted it into an island, and rendered it secure from attack on all sides, except the eastern, where the water was narrow, and not of great depth.

The Kakkhas are still a well-known tribe of Seistanis. This ancient fortress was built and held by the tribe in the days when they must have been important and powerful.

Excavations carried out there by Professor E. Herzfeld in 1929 have proved that the city was inhabited in pre-Sassanian times, about 200 B.C., and then again in Sassanian times. Mural paintings were discovered definitely Sassanian in type, while some paintings looked very much like the Achæmenian soldiers in the frieze of the archers discovered in Susa. A statue of a Sassanian King, or rather the sagittal section of one, and a Parthian fire-altar too were found by him, but no Buddhistic remains.

From the top of the Kuh-i-Khwaja looking north-west, the Mil-i-Nadiri, on the caravan road from Seistan to Birjand, can be seen on a clear day.

The mountain is called the Kuh-i-Khwaja. Who is the Khwaja? Numerous conjectures have been made. The Mahomedans now say it was Ali, but there is no evidence to show that Ali was ever here. On the other hand, from the Avesta and the Bundeish there is ample evidence to show that Zoroaster had been here.

I will mention the allusions to the Kuh-i-Khwaja from the Avesta, where it is known as Mount Ushidarena :—

Yashna I : 14.—“ And I announce and complete my Yasna to the Mountain Ushidarena, the Mazda made with its sacred brilliance, and to all the mountains glorious with sanctity, with their abundant glory Mazda made, the unconsumed glory which Mazda made.”

Zamyad Yasht XIX : 2.—“ From there grew up Mount Ushi-dhao, Ushidarena ¹.”

Note.—The mountain that gives understanding, that preserves understanding, the later Mount Oshdashtar.

Zamyad Yasht XIX : 66.—“ That¹ cleaves unto him who grows up there, where lies Lake Kasava, along with the Hætumant River ; there where stands Mount Ushidhan, surrounded by waters that run from the mountain.”

The lake Kasava being the Hamun, and the Hætumant River the Helmand, this places the location of Mount Ushidarena with Kuh-i-Khwaja beyond a doubt.

Siroza I : 26.—“ To Arstat who makes the world grow : to Mount Ushidarena made by Mazda, the seat of holy happiness.”

Mount Ushidarena is supposed to be the actual seat of the Hvareno.

*Introduction to the Avesta Yasht XVIII*².—“ Arshtat is truthfulness ; she is invoked in company with the genius of truth Rashnu Razishta, on the day Rashnu. On the day specially dedicated to her, the twenty-sixth day of the month, she is invoked in company with Mount Ushidarena, which accounts for the singular fact that her Yasht is wholly devoted to the Hvareno, and this is hardly distinguishable from the Zamyad Yasht as Mount Ushidarena is the actual seat of the Hvareno. Whence comes this particular connection of Arshtat, with Mount Ushidarena is uncertain, unless it alludes to the fact that the possession of the Hvareno can be secured only through truthfulness ; as soon as Yima began to find delight in words of falsehood and untruth, the Hvareno flew away from him.”

Bundaish XII : 15.—“ Mount Aush-dashtao is in Sagastan.”

Mount Aush-dashtao is the same as Usidarena.

I quote a passage from Sir Jivanjee Mody's book, “ The Wonder and Greatness of Seistan ” :—

1. “ The wonder and the greatness of the land Seistan are greater and better than other cities for these following reasons.
2. One (reason) is that the river Hætumant, and the lake Frazdan, and the sea Kianseh, and the mountain Nush-Dashtar (are situated) in the land of Seistan.
3. The birth and the bringing up of Noshidar and Mashidan, Mâh and Sôshyos of Zaratusht of Spitamen and the resurrection take place in that (country).”

The sea “ Kyansih ” is the Hamun, and in the Bundahish, it is spoken of as a sea. The Bundaish also says that Mount Ushdarena is inside “ the Lake of Kansu.”

From the Avesta and the Bundaish, it is quite evident that Zoroaster knew more about Seistan than any other part of Iran, and it is from Seistan that the Messiah is supposed to come, and also in Seistan, the resurrection will take place. It must not be supposed that Mount Ushdarena is the Mountain of the Revelation. That in all probability is the Savalan

¹ “ That ” refers to the kingly glory, “ The Farr-i-Kyani.”

² Darmsteter, “ Sacred Books of the East.”

Dagh in Azerbaijan. We can safely assume that Zoroaster lived in the Kuh-i-Khwaja, and from here propagated his religion, and that the "Khwaja" in all probability refers to this great Prophet.

What then is the age of Zoroaster, and when did the religion first take its start? That Seistan was a great centre of Zoroastrianism there is no doubt as can be testified by the ruins that still exist, and the religion flourished there even long after the Mahomedan conquest. I have heard it said that the religion is 5,000 years old, and also that Zoroaster preached in the reign of King Gushtasp or Vistasp, the last of the Kaianian Kings, supposed to be about 1300 B.C.

If, as is so tempting to believe, King Gustasp or Vistasp was Hystaspes, the father of Darius, then the Zoroastrian religion must have taken its start between 600 and 500 B.C., about 2,500 years ago. We know that Hystaspes, though not a King, was Satrap of Khorassan, and also ruled over Seistan, and it is more than likely that he gave Zoroaster his protection. With Hystaspes backing him up, it was easy for him to live in the Kuh-i-Khwaja, and propagate his religion from there. Another reason, that Zoroastrianism was not preached, certainly not prevalent, before the age of Hystaspes, is that on the tomb of Cyrus or the Palace of Pasargadaë, there are no signs or inscriptions relating to Zoroaster or even Ahura Mazda, and we may presume that the earlier Achæmenian Kings were non-Zoroastrians. The tomb of Darius, the inscriptions at Behistun and Persepolis speak of Ahura Mazda, and show definite signs of Zoroastrianism. If a conclusion can be drawn therefrom, then King Darius was the first of the Achæmenian Kings to embrace Zoroastrianism.

If the theory is correct that Hystaspes, the father of Darius, protected Zoroaster, and sent him to Seistan to propagate the religion, it is certain that there was no better place than the Kuh-i-Khwaja, a mountain nine hundred feet high, for him to do his worship and speak therefrom. It would be well for the Parsi who looks at the mountain to think of the great Prophet who lived there, and preached therefrom a great and pure religion that has lived undefiled through years of persecution, and that has stood the test of time. Let him not regard the Kuh-i-Khwaja as one of the sights of Seistan, but rather as a place from where his teaching of "Manashni, Gavashni and Kunashni" ("Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds") has come.

CHAPTER LXIII

FAREWELL IMPRESSIONS OF IRAN

THESE twenty-five centuries that have elapsed have witnessed the ruin of the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, the triumph of Islam over Zoroastrianism, the devastating hordes of Chengiz Khan and Timur Lang, and other barbaric conquerors, and has compressed this once vast empire into narrower limits. Though Iran has lost the high civilization that it possessed in the Achæmenian and Sassanian days, she has by no means relapsed into barbarism. Under the present regime, order and security prevail, roads are made, and kept in good repair, and very soon a network of railways will connect the whole country. Iran now is a rising country.

The country is vast, and presents many features of interest. The traveller through Seistan and Khorassan or from the Gulf to Yezd, and even from Bushire to Teheran, sees nothing but a long stretch of desert with oases in between, and rightly describes it as such. The traveller through the Bakhtiari Mountains, and from the plain of Silakhor through Western Iran to Urumieh, seeing pasturages and perennial fields, and careful cultivation and abundant waters, with villages dotted here and there, will describe Iran as a land of plentiful water, a peopled and well-watered garden. The traveller now may with equal facility go through the arid wastes of Eastern Iran, or through the fertile but malarious country round the Caspian with its alluvial valleys and rice-fields, with its forests, and jungle belts, or go through the verdureless plains and steppes of Kerman and Luristan.

Iran proper, the country which gave birth to a race which has evinced such considerable vitality, is a vast plateau from 3,000 feet to 6,000 feet in altitude, extending on the east into Afghanistan, on the north-west into Armenia, and overlooking the Caspian to the north, and the Persian Gulf to the south, and Mesopotamia to the south-west. With the exception of the provinces of Mazanderan, Ghilan and Azerbaijan, the general impression it conveys is that of aridity and barrenness. Iran has been termed a country of mountains, and nearly the whole surface is mountainous, but the proportion to the plain country varies in different parts. The level country or Dashtistan stretches along the greater part of the coast of the Persian Gulf, and to the Shatt-el-Arab on the south ; and along the Caspian Sea to the foot of the Elburz Mountains on the north meeting with the plains of Tartary. The mountains are contained between these two lines extending east and west along the limits of the empire.

The appearance of the mountains is arid and forbidding ; in most parts they present nothing but huge masses of grey rock (or in the case of the Elburz, a pink ferruginous face), piled in strata on each other ; or they start in a rugged ridge abruptly from the plain with no other undulations than that which has been occasioned by the washing down of detritus from their sides. They are unenlivened by woods and shrubs, except in the spring when they are covered with verdure.

The Caspian provinces and Azerbaijan are exceptions to the above ; the former are full of jungles, water and mountain in its most varied forms ; the forests are magnificent, and the whole country is green. The latter is not so beautiful, but is rich and fertile, and devoid neither of vegetation nor wood. In fact, Urumieh is known as the "Paradise of Iran."

To reach the great Iranian plateau, from the south the four kotals or mountain passes have to be crossed, and the altitude attained is 5,100 feet in one hundred and seventy-seven miles: from the Mesopotamian plains on the west, the plateau is accessible by surmounting the Tak-i-Ghirreh Pass in the Zagros Mountains; to get to the plateau from the north, the passes in the Elburz Mountains have to be got over. This great Iranian plateau, except in Eastern Iran, is intersected by mountain ranges and detached mountain masses which store up the snowfall on which Iranian agriculture depends, the rainfall being very scanty to be of any particular value.

Viewed from a commanding position, the appearance of most Iranian towns is very uninteresting. The houses are all built of mud, and differ very little from the colour of the earth, and look more like irregularities on its surface rather than human dwellings. The houses seldom exceed one storey, and are surrounded by walls. Occasionally mosques and minarets relieve the scene. The only relief to the monotony is found in the gardens, adorned with chenars, poplars, and cypresses, with which the towns and villages are intermingled and surrounded.

On a closer view, the walls of the city are seen in many cases to be dilapidated, and the houses of the poor alone can be seen; the houses of the rich being screened from public gaze by high walls of mud. Very often the houses of the rich and the poor are side by side.

In the bazaars, the different trades keep together. Caravanserais are attached to the bazaars which serve for the reception of merchants and their goods.

The Mahomedan Iranian of to-day is different from the Zoroastrian. The former is supposed to be polite—too polite—and that leads to constant falsehood which is the great drawback of the country to-day. He swears by God, by the head of the King, by that of the person he addresses, by his own, that what he is asserting is not false, but the oaths which are used to attest his veracity are only proofs of the want of it. “*Khuda kasam*” is a common expression and should never be believed. The Zoroastrians are entirely free from these vices, and are well renowned for their honesty and probity, and are respected by all.

As regards antiquities, there are plenty to be found in Iran. Some are disappointing, but others are most interesting and fascinating. There is nothing anywhere to touch the Rock Tombs of the Naksh-i-Rustam, or the Palaces of Persepolis.

CHAPTER LXIV

CONCLUSION

TRAVELLING in Iran is easy and comfortable. As long as thirty years ago, travellers had to go about on horseback and spend the night in chapar khanehs or post-houses from where other horses could be got. Even the roads were not safe. Now, motor cars have taken the place of horses, the roads have been enormously improved, and every year sees new roads made, and old roads repaired. Garages and hotels have taken the place of chapar khanehs, and the garages have sleeping accommodation, and on the whole are very comfortable and clean. Board and lodging can be got fairly cheaply, and separate rooms too can be obtained. If compelled to stop in some places where garages do not exist, the visitor may go to a caravanserai. Very often, however, there is some one in the village who has a house with a balakhaneh (one upper storey), where he can put up for the night. His host, if he is not too particular, will be pleased to cook some food for him. If the worst comes to the worst, he can spend the night in a kava khaneh or public coffee house. They are not clean, but many of them have a back room, and the proprietor is only too glad to let it for the night. On the main road from Bushire to Teheran, and between Zahidan (Duzdap), Kerman, Yezd and Isfahan, the Indo-European Telegraph Department used to have rest-houses in important places. Travellers could spend a night in great comfort in one of these rest-houses provided passes were taken and permission obtained from the Director. Food, however, had to be found. Now, while I am on the subject, I take the opportunity of publicly thanking the late I.E.T.D.¹ for their kind hospitality to me during my travels.

Camp equipment, a camp bed and, above all, a camp washstand and bath are absolutely essential, and required on the journey. Sanitation in Iran is very bad, and bathrooms in small places do not exist. Tinned food will be found useful on the way, especially in East Iran, and on the Duzdap-Kerman road. If the traveller is not finicky, and does not mind what he eats, he can always obtain Iranian food and bread and tea from the kava khanehs as he goes along, and any kava khaneh will cook a chicken and eggs for him. A tiffin basket too will be found useful on the way.

A twelve to twenty horse-power car is all that is required for the journey. Personally, I advise the traveller to take an American car, for spare parts can be readily obtained in all the big places in Iran. A car with a long wheel-base should not be taken, nor one with a low clearance. Most of the places can be visited by car, but when horses are required, it is not too difficult to obtain them, and tact and politeness, and a little money judiciously spent will go a long way to obtaining the traveller's end.

Money, except just a little, say, a hundred tomans in cash at a time, should never be taken while travelling. Notes from one village will not be accepted in another, or if they are, a certain percentage will be deducted. Silver is current everywhere. A letter of credit from the Imperial Bank of Iran is much more preferable to cash. It must be remembered, however, that the bank is closed about one hundred and sixty days out of three hundred and sixty-five, and the traveller would do well to take a list of the holidays with him from Zahidan (Duzdap). He must also remember that Friday is a holiday in Iran and not Sunday.

¹ The I. E. T. D. has now been abolished. Garages have taken the place of the rest-houses.

It is also advisable, while travelling, to keep a small medicine chest, with ordinary drugs. The two chief things for which drugs will be required are attacks of conjunctivitis and intestinal disorders. The water in some places is bad, and people are apt to contract dysentery and allied disorders. There are chemists' shops in some of the important places of Iran, especially Sultanabad and Isfahan, where the stock may be replenished. Nesfield's tablets for the purification of water will be found most useful on the way.

The best time to travel in Iran is either spring or autumn, but the drawback about the latter is that the days are short. There is nothing to equal the delightful autumn tints on the trees. In the spring, the rivers are foaming torrents, and sometimes difficult to ford.

Just latterly there has been considerable talk about Parsis from India coming to settle down in Iran, a venerable Parsi gentleman, the late Mr. Ardeshirjee Eduljee (otherwise known as Mr. Ardeshir Reporter) who was thirty-five years in Iran, being a pioneer of the movement. I am not going to discuss the pros and cons of whether it is advisable for the Indian Parsi to settle down permanently in Iran or not, and whether he should do it under British protection or not. It is outside the scope of this book. What he should do is to travel all round Iran, and see for himself what would suit him best. He will find in Iran variety of every kind, calculated to suit different tastes. If he is religiously inclined, and believes in the Avesta and the legends of his country, he will find plenty of food for thought in Demavend, and the Elburz range (Haoro-Berezaiti), and Mazanderan where the divs and jins of old used to be: there is also the Sehend Dagh, the Mount Asnavand of the Avesta; and the Savalan Dagh, the mountain of the revelation; Seistan too will furnish him with ruins of fire temples, and Towers of Silence, and "Mount Ushidarena, Mazda made." If he is interested in natural scenery, he will find forests and rivers, waterfalls, mountains and valleys full of verdure in Mazanderan, Gilan and Azerbaijan; if interested in archaeology and ancient history he will find material all over Iran, especially in Central and Southern Iran; if on pleasure bent, Meshed and Teheran will furnish him with all he wants. There are cinemas in Teheran. Recently there has been vast improvement of old roads, and opening of new roads, and also of new, up-to-date hotels in various parts of Iran.

One hundred and fifty miles of South Iranian States Railway are now opened for traffic.

If this book will bring more Parsis into Iran to see the beauties and antiquities of their own native land, it will have achieved its purpose. Iran is a steadily progressing country.

APPENDIX I

OTHER RUINS

I *Ruins of Firuzabad*.—Firuzabad is situated on the old caravan road from Seistan to Bushire, the road which avoids the kotals. Its name, “The Abode of Victory,” is the name given in the tenth century by the Asad-ud-Dowleh of the Dilemite dynasty to a place originally found by the Achæmenian and embellished by the Sassanian monarchs, and known as Gur, or Ardeshir Khuvrieh (The Glory of Ardeshir). This is what El-Istakhri says of Gur :—

“Gur is on the foundations of Ardeshir—hence the name “Gur” or foundation. It is reported that the place where it stands was filled with stagnant water and resembled a lake, and that Ardeshir made a vow to build a town on the spot where he should conquer his enemies, and to construct on it a fire temple, and he was victorious at Gur. He contrived to remove the water of the place by making an opening for the water to flow away : and he built on that spot “Gur.” In short, the town was built by Ardeshir Babekan, on the site of an older town, Gur, and he then changed its name to Ardeshir Khuvrieh or The Glory of Ardeshir. Ardeshir built here a palace and a big fire temple.”

The other ruins at Firuzabad are :—

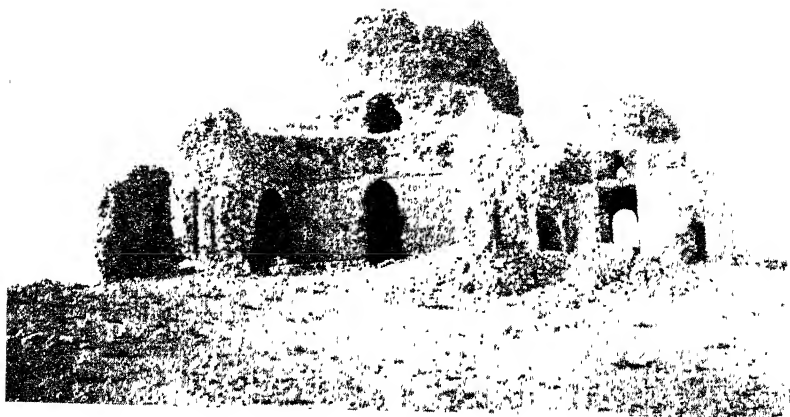
(1) The Koleh-i-Dukhter, a ruined castle upon the heights commanding the Teng-ab, a gorge to the north of the town.

(2) Two Sassanian bas-reliefs on the walls of the same gorge, one being an equestrian combat, and the other, the investiture of Ardeshir with the imperial cydaris by Ormuzd.

(3) The ruins of a vaulted building supposed to be the Palace of Ardeshir. The palace has a length of above three hundred and ninety feet and a width of above one hundred and eighty feet. The ground plan is an oblong, and the building had a single entrance by an arch which faced north, and led into a vaulted hall ninety feet long by forty-three feet wide. At either side of the main hall, were two lesser halls, also opening into it by arches. Beyond these rooms and communicating with them by narrow doorways were three domed chambers about forty-three feet square, with domes rising to the height of seventy feet. These chambers opened into others, and beyond them was a court ninety feet square. In the interior of all the chambers were false windows. Externally the building was decorated by tall arches, and narrow reed-like pillars. Ferguson¹ speaks of it as “more like a gigantic bastille than the palace of a gay, pavilion-loving people like the Persians.”

(4) A ruined tower of unhewn stone built upon a platform, and retaining traces of a winding ascent from terrace to terrace. This is supposed to be the Atash Gadah or Fire Temple of Ardeshir, but that is doubtful. The place is entirely in ruins now. The restoration as done by Coste shows that it was an open porch composed of two columns on the upper level ; four lobbies gave access to a small temple placed upon a platform. The column had thirty-eight flutes. The size of the firestone blocks is almost the same as that of Persepolis or Pasargadæ. The stones were laid without cement and united by dovetails.

¹ History of Architecture, Vol. I, p. 384.



From a photograph by A. W. Davis, Esq.
SARVESTAN—SOUTH FACADE



ORNAMENTATION OF THE MASHITA PALACE.

From Rawlinson's "Seventh Monarchy"
By kind permission of Longmans,
Green & Co.

Masoudi (A.D. 910) states that the Beit-en-Nar (fire temple) built by Ardeshir stood upon a knoll an hour beyond the town of Gur; near it was a very curious spring, around which was celebrated a yearly festival. But this ruined tower is in the middle of a flat level, and perhaps represents the swamp claimed by Ardeshir, bounded on either side by an arm of the river; there is only one spring and that is about three miles to the north, and near the palace. If Masoudi is correct, then the ruined tower cannot be the Atash-Gadah. It might have been a watch tower, which Ardeshir had built in the middle of the town, whose staircases and outer works were destroyed by the Arabs. Masoudi mentions this tower and says it was destroyed by the Muslims.

Serbistan.—Serbistan lies on the caravan road from Niriz to Shiraz. The palace here is assigned to the reign of Shapur II. The ground plan is an oblong, the length being forty-two French metres, and the breadth nearly thirty-seven metres. The building faces west, and has three archways, and between them are groups of three semi-circular pilasters. Beyond the outer arches, and towards the angles of the building is a single pilaster. Within the archways are halls of different dimensions, the central one being the narrowest. This opens by an arched doorway into a square chamber. It is domed, and has a diameter of forty-two feet, the height of the dome from the floor being sixty-five feet. Beyond this chamber is a court forty-five by forty feet, which has rooms of various sizes opening into it. One of these is domed, and the others are vaulted. The great domed chamber opens towards the north, on a deep porch or hall, which was entered from without by the usual arched portal. On the south it communicates with a pillared hall, above sixty feet long by thirty feet broad. There is another somewhat similar hall on the north side of the building, in width about equal, but in length not quite fifty feet. In both halls, the pillars are short, not exceeding six feet. They support piers, which run up perpendicularly for a considerable height, and then become ribs of the vaulting.¹

APPENDIX II

IRANIAN RUINS OUTSIDE IRAN

I. In Mesopotamia on the banks of the Tigris about sixteen miles south of Baghdad, is the Arch of Ctesiphon, the remains of the Takht-i-Khoshru or the Palace of the Chosroes, built by Anushirwan the Just. All that can be seen now is a single vaulted hall on the grandest scale, seventy-two feet wide, eighty-five feet high, and one hundred and fifteen feet deep, together with the mere outer wall which constituted the main facade of the building. The apartments which must have existed at the two sides, and at the back of the hall have completely disappeared, and not even their foundations can be seen.

At each side of the great hall were probably two other ones, communicating with each other, and could be entered from the hall and from the outside. Beyond the great hall was probably a domed chamber opening on to a courtyard round which were a number of other apartments. In all probability the building was an oblong of which the shorter sides were about three hundred and seventy feet and, like the other Sassanian buildings, it probably had three or more entrances.

¹ The whole of this description is taken from Rawlinson's "Seventh Monarchy."

The ornamentation of the existing facade of the ruins is by doorways, doubly arched recesses, pilasters and string courses. These last divide the building externally into an appearance of three or four distinct storeys. The first and second storeys have pilasters; in the former the pilasters are in pairs, and in the latter stand singly. The pilasters of the upper storey are not superimposed on those of the lower ones. In the third and fourth storeys there are no pilasters, but only arched recesses continued without any interruption. Over the arch of the great hall, there is a foiling of seventeen small semi-circular arches.¹

II. Van.—In Van in Armenia, to the south side of the great citadel in an inaccessible position are cut on tablets smoothed in the rock, the cuneiform inscriptions of Xerxes. The inscription says:—

1. A great God is Ahura Mazda who is the greatest of the gods, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes King, one King of many, one Lord of many.
2. I am Xerxes the great King, King of Kings, King of countries possessing many kinds of people, King of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius the King, the Achæmenide.
3. *Says Xerxes the King.*—Darius the King who was my father, he by the grace of Ahura Mazda did much which was beautiful, and he commanded to dig out this place where he did not make an inscription written; afterwards I commanded to write this inscription; (let Ahura Mazda) protect (me) with the gods, and my kingdom, and what has been done by me.

The inscription is in Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian on a niche in the perpendicular rock of the citadel.

III. Mashita.—At Mashita near the Dead Sea is a palace built by Chosroes II, and consists of two distinct buildings separated by a courtyard in which there was a fountain. They both extended about one hundred and eighty feet along the front, with a depth of about one hundred and fifty feet. The main building was to the north, and entered by three semi-circular archways standing side by side, separated by columns of hard white stone. These columns were surmounted by Corinthian capitals, and supported richly fluted arches. The archways led into an oblong hall eighty feet long by sixty feet wide, into which opened the main room of the building by a doorway. The main room was a triapsal hall built of bricks, and surmounted by a domed roof which rested on pendentives. The diameter of the hall was about sixty feet. On either side and behind the triapsal hall, and on either side of the court on which it opened, were smaller rooms opening into each other, and symmetrically arranged, each side being the exact counterpart of the other. The number of these apartments was twenty-five.

The other building is on the southern side of the courtyard of the first. There is only a large hall, and the apartments are small and it is presumed that it was "intended as guard-rooms for the soldiers." Externally it was most beautifully adorned. The outer wall was built of hard stone, and on it was carved a pattern of zigzags and rosettes, and then over the entire surface, a tracery of animals, foliage and fruits. The zigzags divide the wall into a number of triangular compartments, and each of these compart-

¹ From Rawlinson's "Seventh Monarchy."



THE BUND-I-KUBAK ON THE HELMAND.

ments has decorations peculiar to itself. In one, a vase stands midway in the triangle at its base. two doves are seated on it back to back; from between them rises a vine, which spreads its branches over the entire compartment, covering it with curves and fruitage. on either side of the vase is a lion and wild-boar confronting the doves with a friendly air; while amid the leaves and grapes are the forms of birds half hidden by the foliage. Peacocks, partridges, parrots, wild-boars, panthers, lions, lynxes and gazelles can be seen. In one panel is a winged lion, in another a man's head in close juxtaposition with a dog, while in another is a man carrying a basket of fruit.

The zigzags themselves and the rosettes are ornamented with a pattern of large leaves, while the moulding below the zigzags and the cornice are covered with designs, the interstices between them being filled with adaptations of vegetable forms.

The ornamentation of the Mashita Palace exceeds anything which is found elsewhere in the Sassanian buildings.¹

Besides the above ruins, there are several ruins in Afghanistan just beyond the right bank of the Helmand, in what is known as Afghan Seistan.

(1) North-east of the Hamun-i-Sawari are the ruins of Peshawaran. The present ruins date from the sixteenth century, but within the perimeter of the modern town there is an ancient mound composed of the debris of ancient Basher.

(2) The ruins of Bina-i-Kai or Zaranj—the city of Kai Khushru—now called Nad Ali.

These ruins are about twelve miles to the south-east of Takht-i-Pul. The greater part of the ruins have been destroyed and effaced by the action of water when the Helmand forced its way through the ruins. The vestiges of the inner town are all that is left. A huge mound separated by a moat from the city rises ninety feet above ground level. On its southern slope is a circular bastion which overlooks the angle formed by the moat towards the south-west. This is the site of the ancient citadel. To the north-east of the city are two mounds about ninety feet high. The northern one consists of debris of baked brick which gives it a red colour and is known as the Red Hill. The other one is known as White Hill, and consists of the debris of pisé or unbaked brick.

To the north-west of the inner city about a mile and a half from the ruins, stands a tower in ruins known as the Burj-i-Asp (or Horse's Tower). It is supposed to have been the stable in which Rustam's charger had been stabled. The tower is, however, modern.

Inside the walls are the ruins of a minaret, about twenty-five feet or thirty feet in height. Octagonal in plan, each side above the pile of debris measures ten feet. There are traces of a balcony. Great baked bricks fixed in the walls can still be seen, and above this the upper part of the minaret rises in a plain shaft much less in diameter. In the middle of each face there is a semi-circular buttress which was carried up to the balcony. The latter was reached by a flight of spiral steps which closed the centre of the shaft, the first turn of the spiral above ground forming a vaulted chamber.

¹ Taken from Rawlinson's "Seventh Monarchy."

(3) *Kaleh-i-Fath*.—Dates from the ninth century A.H. This name was probably given to it by Malik Kutbuddin who rebelled against Shah Rukh, and held this place successfully against him. The fort has long since vanished, but remains of reservoirs and hammams are visible.

To the south-west of the citadel are the ruins of a college or Madrassah said to have been endowed by Malik Hamza. It is called the Gumbaz-i-Surkh (Red-Domed) because it was made of red bricks. It originally consisted of a central building, on either side of which were two wings containing apartments, and a colonnade, made to house the Professors and their pupils.

Tradition says that when Malik Hamza died, he was buried in the central building. To the south of this Gumbaz-i-Surkh, is another domed building, called the Gumbaz-i-Yakdast, or the Domed Building of the One-handed Man, much older than the preceding.

(4) *Kaleh-i-Gavak*.—Thirteen miles north of Kaleh-i-Fath. Here there is a castellated mansion surrounded by an outer wall. The building is dilapidated and the wall is in ruins. The building is in the shape of a Latin cross, the four equal arms of which are lofty adits communicating with apartments on either side, the former being open to the roof which was arched, while on either side, the apartments were arranged in two storeys. The courtyard is square and open to the sky.

The ruins date from the times of Malik Hamza. This, however, is the site of the famous fight between Rustam and his son Sohrab, where the former proved victorious.

(5) *Ruins of Sar-o-Tar*.—Equidistant about thirty-two miles from Bina-i-Kai and Zahidan and eighteen miles from the Helmand River in a direct line, this fortress was defended by a double line of walls. The citadel was a polygon of six irregular sides. The palace buildings are absolutely in ruins, but there are the remains of a building of great size in the inner fort adjoining the walls, and overlooking the western angles of the third line of defences.

Sar-o-Tar and the neighbouring ruins of Chahilburj were the seat of the Government of Seistan during the Parthian or Indo-Parthian period. It is from this district that most of the Parthian and Sassanian coins are brought for sale to Iranian Seistan. According to the legend of Khwaja Amiran, the district was inhabited by the Ashg-ka-Putr, the sons of Ashgk. This is worthy of belief as there is a tribe in Seistan, who are said to be and who claim descent from that ruling race, who were definitely of Parthian stock.

There is a curious legend relating to Sar-o-Tar.¹ All of a sudden about A.D. 203 an animal of the size of a fox having a tail many yards in length, appeared in the country. Wherever it went the crops were destroyed and the inhabitants died. This animal took up its abode in Sar-o-Tar, and for forty years the place was rendered uninhabitable. The remnants of the inhabitants found a recluse well known for his piety and virtues, and brought him there. He exorcised the evil spirit, and the fort and the neighbouring country were rendered fit for human habitation. Of course, this probably refers to a pestilence or a foreign invasion, about the year A.D. 203 which carried destruction in its wake, and depopulated the place. The date may not have been accurate, for a few years later Ardeshir Babagan defeated the last Parthian King, Artaban V (Artabanus V), and was subjugating the districts whose Chiefs had been only paying a nominal allegiance to the Princes who succeeded one another to the throne in the last days of the Parthian Empire.

¹ Tate, "Seistan."

The ramparts of Sar-o-Tar are very probably those which were first made when the fortress was laid out, and here are the ruins of the Parthian and Indo-Parthian period. The other ruins of the palace, and inside the inner fort are about the same period as those of Zahidan. In A.D. 1313 the fortress was given over to Timur who ordered it to be dismantled.

(6) *Trakun*.—This is a very ancient site, and is supposed to be the birthplace of Rustam.

The town is situated beyond the northern terrace of the valley of the Rud-i-Bigaban, upon a block of kim one thousand feet in length and five hundred feet in width. On the other side, it has a height of one hundred and fifty feet above the plain, and ends in a sheer precipice. It was fortified on the eastern side. On the north and south flanks, as the cliffs increase in height, the walls decrease, and only a low parapet exists in open spaces between buildings. The gateway is in ruins, which existed near to the north end of the walls, and led into a small courtyard, a hundred feet square on all sides, round which the domed buildings of the town rise up in tier above tier.

The buildings are domed and built with sun-dried bricks, but many of them are in better repair than those of Zahidan, and belong to the modern period.

The lower courses of the northern walls were built with baked bricks some of which were eighteen inches square. The superstructure and inside chambers were built with sun-dried bricks. A well supplied the town with water. About half-way down the slope is a subterranean gallery that descends for a length of a hundred feet, and leads to a chamber about fifteen feet square. The gallery was originally vaulted and lined with baked bricks. Very little now remains of it.

The walls of Trakun are loopholed and have no towers. A series of loopholes extend along the summit of the walls, and are arranged in sets of three, the central loophole facing the front, and the two side ones facing obliquely. The ramparts are solid, and there is a narrow vaulted gallery in the thickness of the walls communicating with various chambers, which afford means of access to portions of the town adjoining the walls to the north and south.

Trakun is a prominent landmark for many miles in all directions, but the place is utterly deserted now for lack of water.

Here, like Karku, was a famous fire temple destroyed in course of time after the Arabs conquered Iran.

Kazvini who wrote in A.D. 1275 said, the wood of the Tagaz, the variety of the tamarisk which grows and thrives only in the waterless tracts was used alone for maintaining the sacred fire. Tagaz fuel burns well giving a clear flame with a minimum of smoke, and burns into a clean ash, while tamarisk wood has a tendency to smoulder, and gives out a great deal of smoke. The priests knelt at a distance from the altar, wearing the paitidana, and veiling their mouths and nostrils, and from time to time placed pieces of Tagaz wood on the altar with long silver tongs, sufficient to maintain a steady blaze.

The fire temple at Trakun was second only to the one at Karku Shah, and these were the principal fanes in the country prior to the conquest by the Arabs, and were probably destroyed by the latter.

APPENDIX III

SASSANIAN COINS AND SEALS



COINS OF ARTAXERXES I (ARDESHIR BABEGAN)



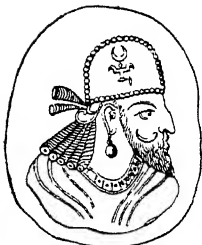
SAPOUR I

Legend reads — "Attestation of Sapor, Fire Priest of the Iranians".



COIN OF SAPOUR I

COINS OF SAPOUR I.

HEAD OF SAPOUR I
(from a gem).

COIN OF HORMISDAS I.



COIN OF VARAHRAN I.



COIN OF VARAHRAN II.



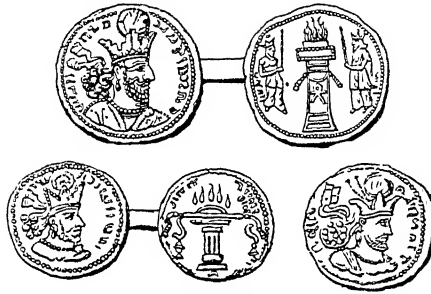
COINS OF NARSES.



HORMISDAS II (from a gem).



COIN OF
HORMISDAS II.



COINS OF SAPOR II.



COIN OF VARAHRAN III.



COIN OF ARTAXERXES II



COINS OF SAPOR III.



LATER SEAL
OF VARAHRAN IV.



VARAHAN IV.



COIN OF ISDIGERD I.



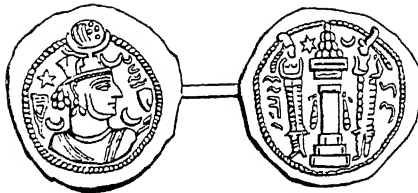
COIN OF VAHRAM V.



COIN OF ISDIGERD II.



COIN OF HORMISDAS III.
(doubtful).



COIN OF KOBAD.



COIN OF PEROZES.



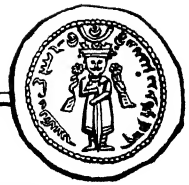
COIN OF BALAS.



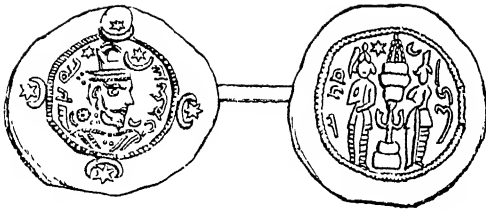
COIN OF ZAMASP.



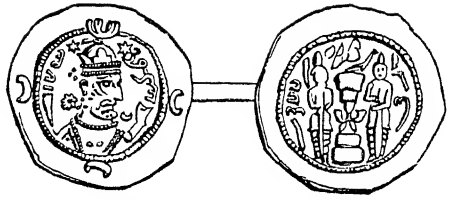
COIN OF CHOSROËS I.



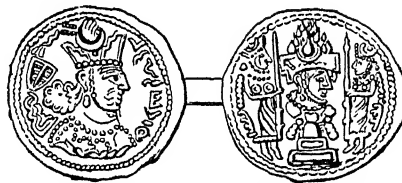
COIN OF CHOSROËS I.



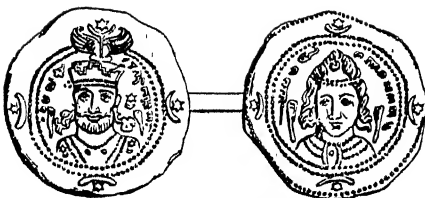
COIN OF HORMISDAS I.



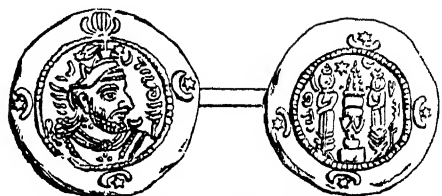
LATE COIN OF VARAHRAN VI.



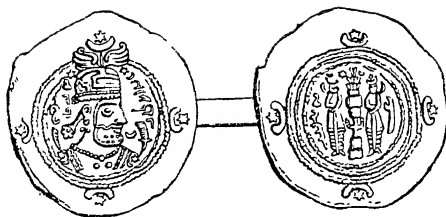
EARLY COIN OF VARAHRAN VI.



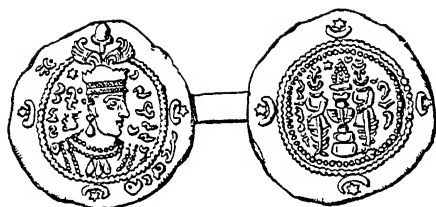
RARE COIN OF CHOSROËS II.



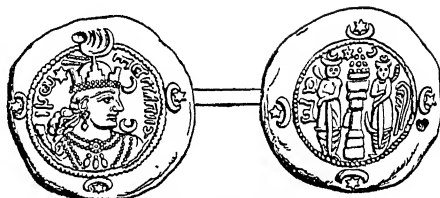
COIN OF SIROËS OR KAVAD II.



COIN OF CHOSROES M.



COIN OF ISDIGERD III.



COIN OF ARTAXERXES III.



FIG. 6. DARIC OF DARIUS

APPENDIX IV

The names of many Iranian cities have been altered during the present reign.
I am giving a list of them.

<i>Old Names.</i>						<i>New Names.</i>					
Duzdap	..	..	..	..	..	Zahidan.					
Nasratabad	..	..	..	..	..	Shehr Zabul.					
Enzali	..	..	..	..	..	Pahlavi.					
Urumieh	..	..	..	..	..	Rezaiyeh.					
Bunder Jazz		..	..	..	..	Bunder Gaz.					
Khabis	..	..	..	..	..	Shahdad.					
Mansurabad (Pusht-i-Kuh)..				..	..	Mehran.					
Astrabad	..	..	..	..	..	Gurgan.					
Bampur	..	..	..	..	..	Iran Shehr.					
Fahrej	..	..	..	..	..	Daver-Panah.					
Sakht-Sar	..	..	..	..	..	Ram Sar.					
Hoviseh	..	..	..	..	..	Haviseh.					
Bani Torof	..	..	..	..	..	Dast-i-Mison.					
Mal-Amir	..	..	..	..	..	Izeh.					
Bastin	..	..	..	..	..	Bostan.					
Mohammerah		..	..	..	..	Khurram Shehr.					
Felahiyyeh (in Khuzis Van)	Shadgan.					
Khafadjieh	Susnekord.					
Chashmeh-Duzdi	Jooiy Zar					

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Ker Porter	Travels.
Rabino	Revue du Monde Mussulman.
Landor	Across Coveted Lands.
Sir John Malcolm	History of Persia.
Malcolm	Five Years in a Persian Town.
Goldsmith	Anglo-Persian Boundary Commission.
Tate	Seistan.
Tate	Frontiers of Baluchistan.

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